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At first glance, the Cyrus Cylinder isn't much to look at. When compared to more glittering, golden finds, it's hard to call this smallish, cracked loaf of clay a "treasure."

Discovered in the ruins of Babylon in 1879, the Cyrus Cylinder records how Persian king Cyrus II conquers Babylon in 539 B.C.; Cyrus is lauded as the new leader hand-selected by the Babylonian god Marduk to rule his people. The text tells how Cyrus repatriates enslaved peoples, restores their temples and idols, and allows them to worship freely throughout the lands he has conquered.

What makes the cylinder so valuable is not the appearance or the record of conquest. It's the ideas: Cyrus's policy of tolerance promotes the idea that people of different traditions, faiths, and languages can live peacefully together. Some historians have described the Cyrus Cylinder as the first great declaration of human rights.

In this issue, HISTORY explores how Cyrus the Great's holdings expanded to become the first true empire the world had ever seen. At its heart was the powerful doctrine espoused by this humble piece of clay, one of history's most unassuming treasures.

Amy Briggs

Amy Briggs, Executive Editor

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PHOTO: KEREN SU/CHINA SPAN/ALAMY/ACI

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

HISTORY

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PASSION FOR THE POLONAISE A POPULAR 18TH-CENTURY STYLE IN FRANCE

HARD CHEESE Sheep are herderd into a reconstruction of an Alpine pen from 3,000 years ago. Making cheese from milk was challenging at higher altitudes.

KOVAUT

FRANCESCO CARRER, ET AL., PLOS ONE

AN IRON AGE hut at the Val Fenga site may mark a starting point in the long history of Swiss cheese. Of five potsherds examined at the site, three bore traces of fat from the first millennium B.C. Archaeologists believe cheese was made here in the summer, which would make it one of the earliest dairies ever found at high altitude.

IRON AGE DIET

Swiss Cheese Found at "Grater" Heights

Three thousand years ago, population changes forced dairy production to move to higher terrain, creating the progenitor for a Swiss specialty.

Emmentaler and Gruyère might be more mature than previously thought. Archaeologists have discovered that the great-granddaddy of today's Swiss cheese was being cooked up in the High Alps as far back as the early Iron Age.

A team from the universities of Newcastle and York was excavating six sites in the Swiss Alps. They found evidence of cheesemaking from the milk of cows, sheep, and goats on pottery sherds from the first millennium B.C.

In the lowlands, evidence of cheesemaking from this time is common. This find, however, offers proof of earlier high-altitude cheese production, a much more challenging process: "Prehistoric herders would have had to have detailed knowledge of the location of alpine pastures," explained Newcastle University research associate Francesco Carrer. They would have had "to cope with unpredictable weather and have the technological knowledge to transform milk into a nutritious and storable product."

It is not known how long this ancient Alpine cheese was matured (or if it had holes). But the find sheds valuable light on changes in Iron Age life. Population growth in the valleys, and loss of land to arable farming, forced herders to seek higher pastures. Since around 300 million pounds of Swiss cheese are eaten in the United States every year, it was clearly worth the effort. ■

What connects America's civil rights movement with a tin-roofed house near Durban?

The small South African town of Groutville lies just 40 miles north of Durban on the Indian Ocean coast. Nestling peacefully among rolling hills of sugarcane, Groutville seems a world away from violent political tensions and an unlikely epicenter for a worldwide protest movement. But it was from here, in a modest tin-roofed house, that Chief Albert Luthuli conducted his peaceful campaign to bring racial equality to South Africa. His extraordinary efforts won him the Nobel Peace Prize and inspired millions, including leading figureheads in the American civil rights movement.

A teacher, lay preacher, and local tribal chief, Luthuli entered national politics late: he was nearly 50 when he was elected President-General of the African National Congress in 1952. By that time South Africa's Nationalist government had adopted the policy of apartheid, literally meaning "apartness," and Luthuli publically supported the Defiance Campaign which peacefully protested against its discriminatory policies. The government stripped Luthuli of his chiefdom and placed him under a series of constraints that confined him to the area around his Groutville home for most of his life. But restricted movement did little to limit his powerful influence on the civil rights movement, both in South Africa and, increasingly, America.

Chief Albert Luthuli was briefly allowed to leave South Africa to receive his Nobel Peace Prize

Luthuli, who firmly believed in nonviolent protest and was optimistic that blacks and whites could live together harmoniously, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1960—the first black recipient of the prize. In his Nobel lecture Luthuli laid out his vision for "a nonracial, democratic South Africa which upholds the rights of all who live in our country to remain there as full citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities with all others," adding that, "For the consummation of this ideal we have labored unflinchingly. We shall continue to labor unflinchingly."

It was an ideal that resonated strongly with Martin Luther King who corresponded with Luthuli and issued a joint statement with him entitled "Appeal for Action against Apartheid." In King's acceptance speech for his own Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 he honored Chief Luthuli "whose struggles with and for his people, are still met with the most brutal expression of man's inhumanity to man." In 1966, Senator Robert F. Kennedy paid an unofficial visit to Luthuli while touring South Africa. Flying by helicopter from Durban, Kennedy and his wife met with Luthuli at his home in Groutville. Under the scrutiny of the police and press the two statesmen strolled around the gardens discussing the problems of the United States and the future of the African people in South Africa. Upon leaving Kennedy described Luthuli simply as one of the most impressive men he had ever met.

Luthuli died in 1967 after reportedly being struck by a train. But the influence of the man, hailed as the greatest African statesman of his time, lived on in the works of civil rights activists everywhere. America's realization of racial equality owes a debt to a man whose courage, determination, and passion inspired minds on both sides of the Atlantic—despite being confined to a small town in South Africa.

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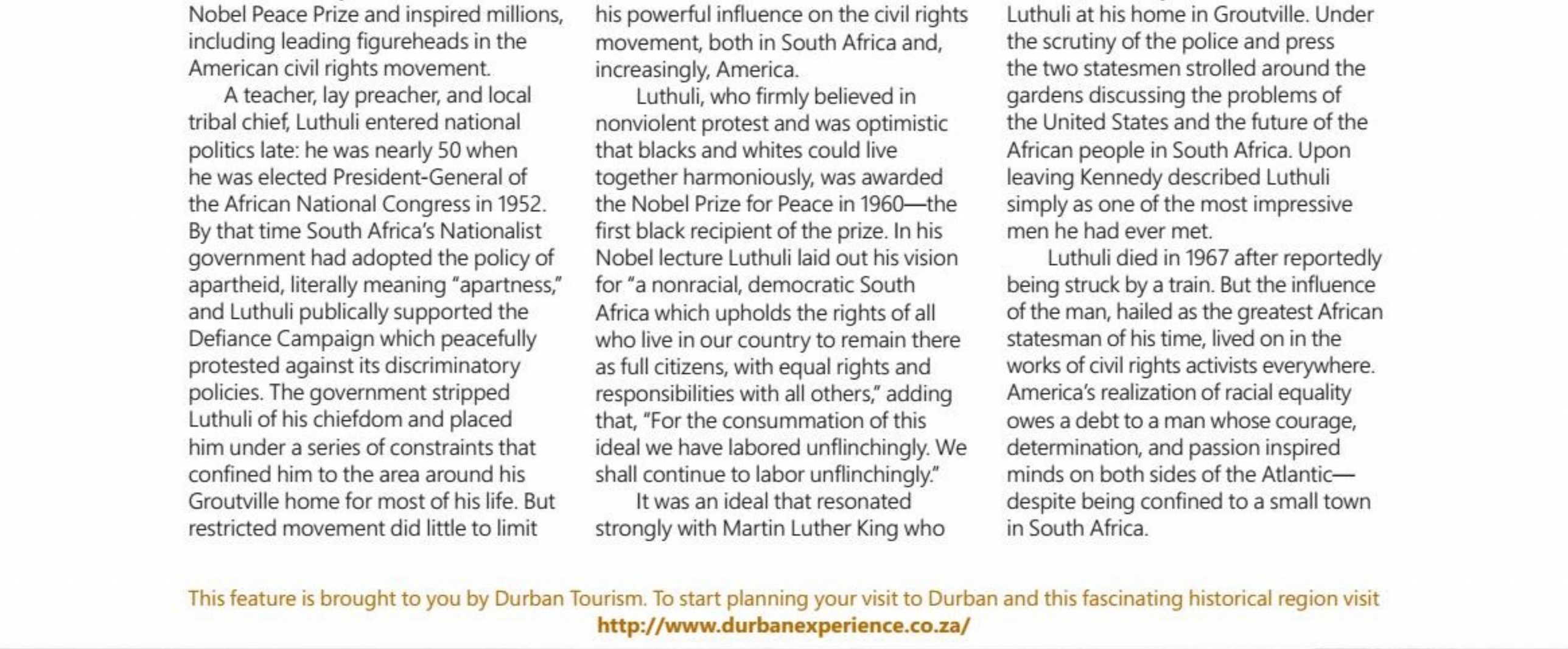


A controversial visitor Robert F. Kennedy arriving in 1966 in apartheid-ruled South Africa

A Dissident's Life: Diogenes of Sinope

The obstreperous ancient Greek philosopher rejected wealth and pomp, renounced possessions, and slept in a barrel. His determination to live by his ideals still intrigues and disturbs today.

An Itinerant Philosopher

circa 412 B.C.

Diogenes is born in the city of Sinope on the banks of the Black Sea in today's Turkey, the son of a coin minter called Hicesias.

circa 360 B.C.

After being banished from Sinope for debasing coins, Diogenes lives in Athens and learns from the Cynic philosopher Antisthenes.

circa 335 B.C.

Alexander the Great, newly crowned king of Macedonia, visits Diogenes in Corinth. The philosopher treats the king with disdain.

circa 323 B.C.

Still faithful to the principles of the Cynic school, Diogenes dies in poverty in Corinth, around age 89.

Third century A.D.

Diogenes Laertius compiles his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* a primary source of information on Diogenes' teachings.

Diogenes was not known for subtlety. Rather, he was the master of the bold gesture. Diogenes helped develop the highly influential philosophical school known as the Cynics. He dedicated his long life to practicing and teaching the ethical principles he held dear: rejecting wealth; embracing the state of nature; challenging injustice; and forgoing shame. Many of his actions seemed outrageous. But Diogenes based his actions on carefully reasoned beliefs, which he took to their logical, often extreme, and sometimes humorous conclusions.

Much of what is known about Diogenes comes from works written centuries after his death. In the third century A.D, Diogenes Laertius, named after the Greek philosopher, wrote *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* a compilation of biographies, doctrines, and anecdotes about Diogenes and his contemporaries. Because many of these stories had been told—and retold—for hundreds of years before being written down, scholars treat them with a healthy skepticism when it comes to factual accuracy. But they recognize their value as an examination of what the Cynical philosophy had come to embody over time.

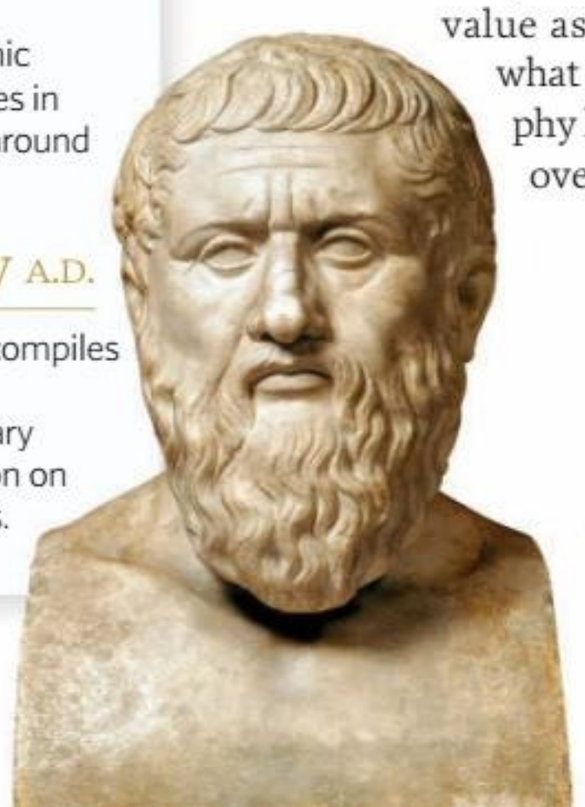
First Exile

Perhaps more than any other philosopher, the stories of Diogenes show him living as a true example of his ideals. Much of his early life remains a mystery. He was born around 412 B.C. in Sinope, a Greek colony on the coast of the Black Sea (modern-day Sinop, in Turkey). He is said to have had a happy and comfortable childhood as the son of a coin minter. It is believed that Diogenes joined his father's business when he came of age.

Diogenes remained in Sinope until he was exiled for counterfeiting money. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* tells how Diogenes' defense was that the god Apollo had demanded him to deface the coinage. Later in life, Diogenes came to understand that deity's instruction was a symbolic one; Apollo had really ordered him to reject the false currency of living a conventional life.

A True Outsider

After his banishment, Diogenes traveled to Athens. There he sought to follow the teachings of Antisthenes, a disciple of Socrates who founded the school of the Cynics. Antisthenes was not in the habit of taking students. But Diogenes was so determined to be mentored by him that when Antisthenes beat him with a



Diogenes ridiculed the ideas of Plato as useless. Plato, in turn, referred to Diogenes as "Socrates gone mad."

ROMAN BUST OF PLATO, PIUS-CLEMENTINE MUSEUM, VATICAN
SCALA, FLORENCE

THE SEARCH FOR AN HONEST MAN

ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN stories about Diogenes is from Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. It tells how Diogenes took to walking about the bright, sunlit streets of Athens, holding up a lantern and proclaiming that he was "in search of a human," often translated as "an honest man." Many painters have depicted this episode, the source of much debate: Was Diogenes skeptical that decent humanity exists? Or was it, in fact, a gesture that affirmed a deep belief in human nature?

"DIOGENES IN SEARCH OF MAN," OIL PAINTING BY PIETER VAN MOL, 17TH CENTURY, NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART

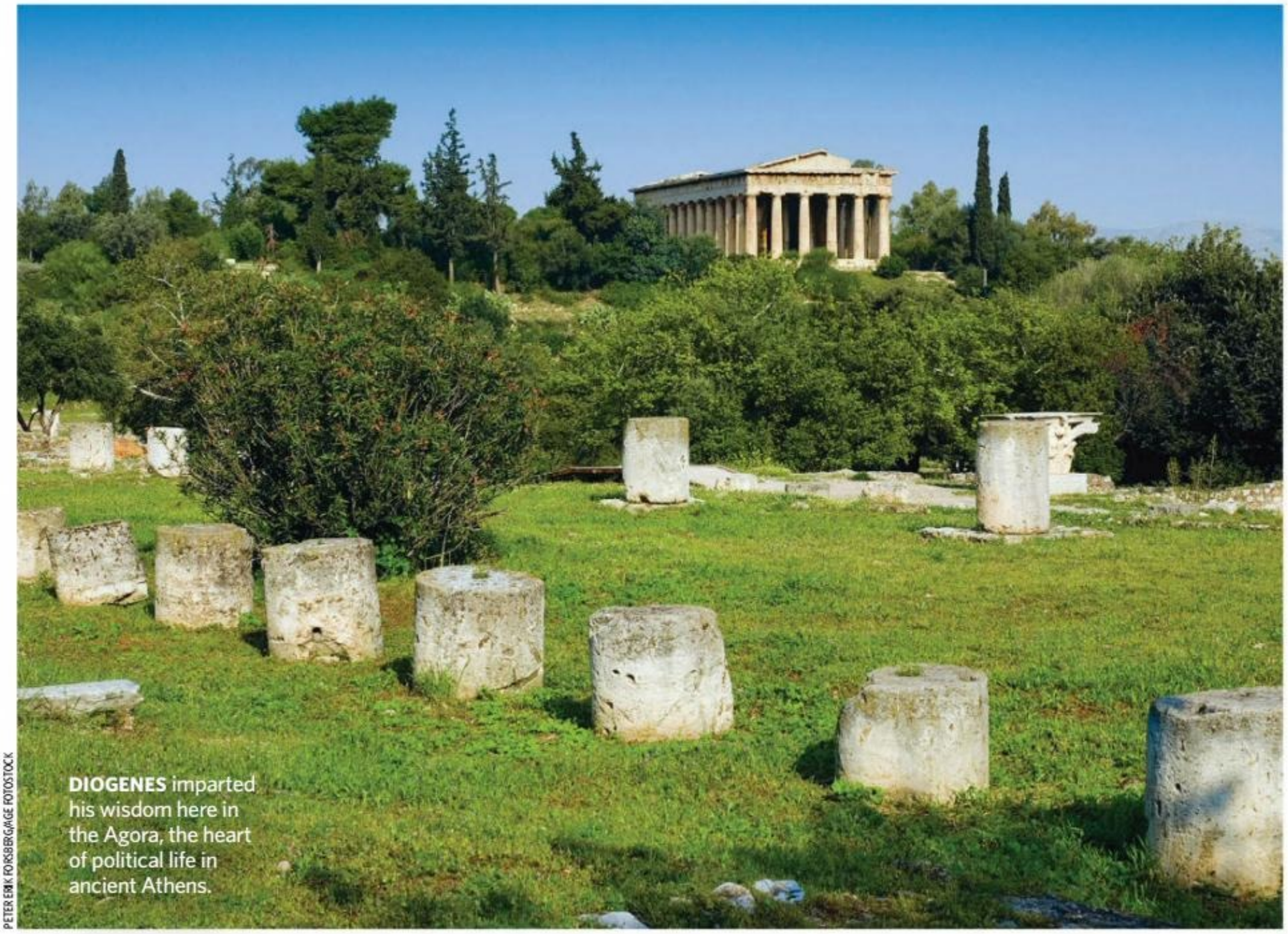
ALBUM

stick, he cried: "Strike, for you will find no wood hard enough to keep me away from you, so long as I think you've something to say."

The term "Cynic" derives from the Greek word *kynikos*, meaning "dog-like." There is some debate as to the exact etymology, but it may refer to the simple, natural lifestyle the Cynics advocated or the way that they "hounded" those they saw as corrupt. Antisthenes' thinking was characterized by a rejection of material goods, a value that his new disciple wholeheartedly embraced.

Having rejected material goods and ever alert to hypocrisy, Diogenes slept outside in the Agora, the center of Athenian political life. It was a literal representation of his belief that there was no difference between the public and private spheres. In order to be free, man had to return to nature. One day, Diogenes Laertius recounts, bystanders scorned Diogenes, calling him "Dog," for eating in the marketplace. But he replied: "It is you who are dogs, when you stand round and watch me at my breakfast."

Despite his obvious poverty, people were reluctant to give him alms. "They think they may one day be lame or blind, but never expect that they will turn to philosophy," Diogenes observed. His acerbic wit was not limited to one particular group. He decried the city's musicians who, "tune the strings of the lyre, while leaving the dispositions of their own souls discordant." He attacked the orators who "preach justice in their speeches, but never practice it." In general, he said, "men strive in digging and kicking to outdo one another, but no one strives to become a good man and true."



PETER ERIK FORSBERG/AGE FOTOSTOCK

DIOGENES imparted his wisdom here in the Agora, the heart of political life in ancient Athens.

Other anecdotes recall how Diogenes rejected the rules of polite society through shocking behavior. In summer, he would roll on hot sand. In winter, he would embrace marble statues covered in snow. He was known to break wind loudly in crowded places, even in the middle of one of his theatrical harangues.

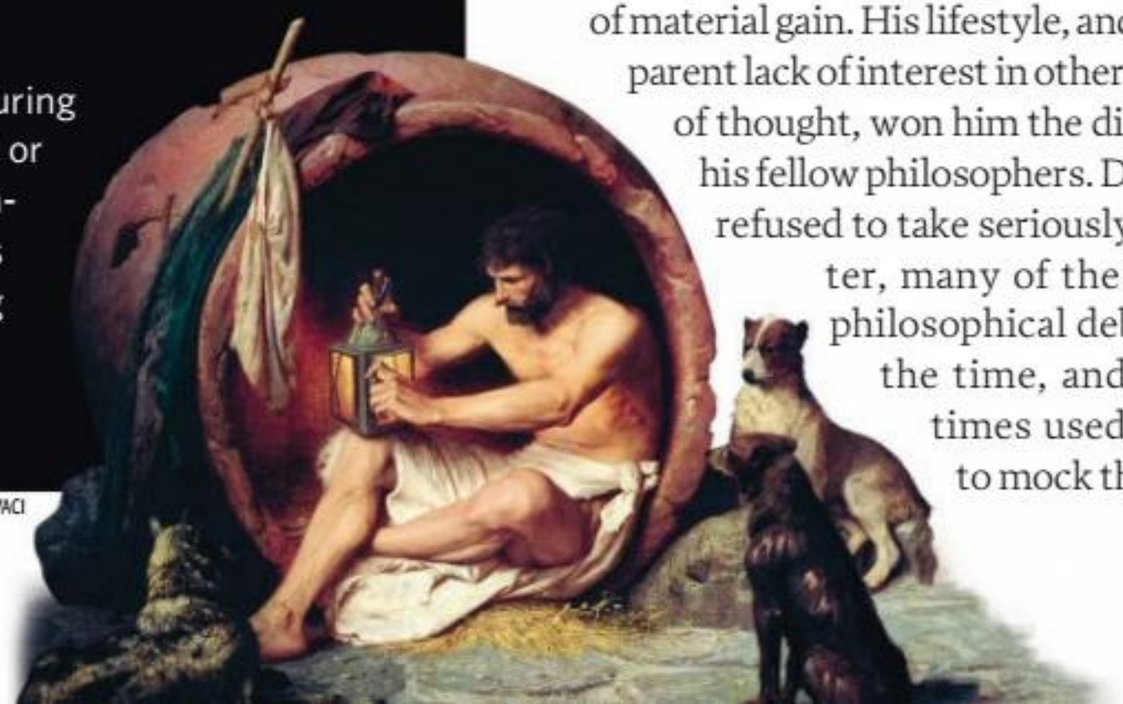
But under most of his provocations lay a serious ethical concern: to limit one's desires to the true necessities prescribed by nature. He argued that the gods did not desire material goods. So to resemble the gods, man must free himself from excessive material yearning. Sleeping out in the open, Diogenes could observe the bustle of city life, and reflect on the futile occupations with which people filled their lives. Diogenes valued frugality, and his lack of housing and simple provisions (he used his clothes as bedding) reflected that. Seeing a child drinking water from his cupped hands, Diogenes reportedly discarded his own bowl, saying: "A child has beaten me in plainness of living."

Putting Down Plato

Diogenes preferred to observe the world from a position of poverty than live in a society defiled by money and the pursuit of material gain. His lifestyle, and his apparent lack of interest in other schools of thought, won him the disdain of his fellow philosophers. Diogenes refused to take seriously, or enter, many of the central philosophical debates of the time, and sometimes used humor to mock them.

COSMOPOLITAN LIVING

DIOGENES LIVED in several different cities during his life, but he did not recognize Sinope, Athens, or Corinth as his true home. To describe his peripatetic lifestyle, Diogenes coined a term that has particular resonance today: *kosmopolitês,* meaning "a citizen of the world."

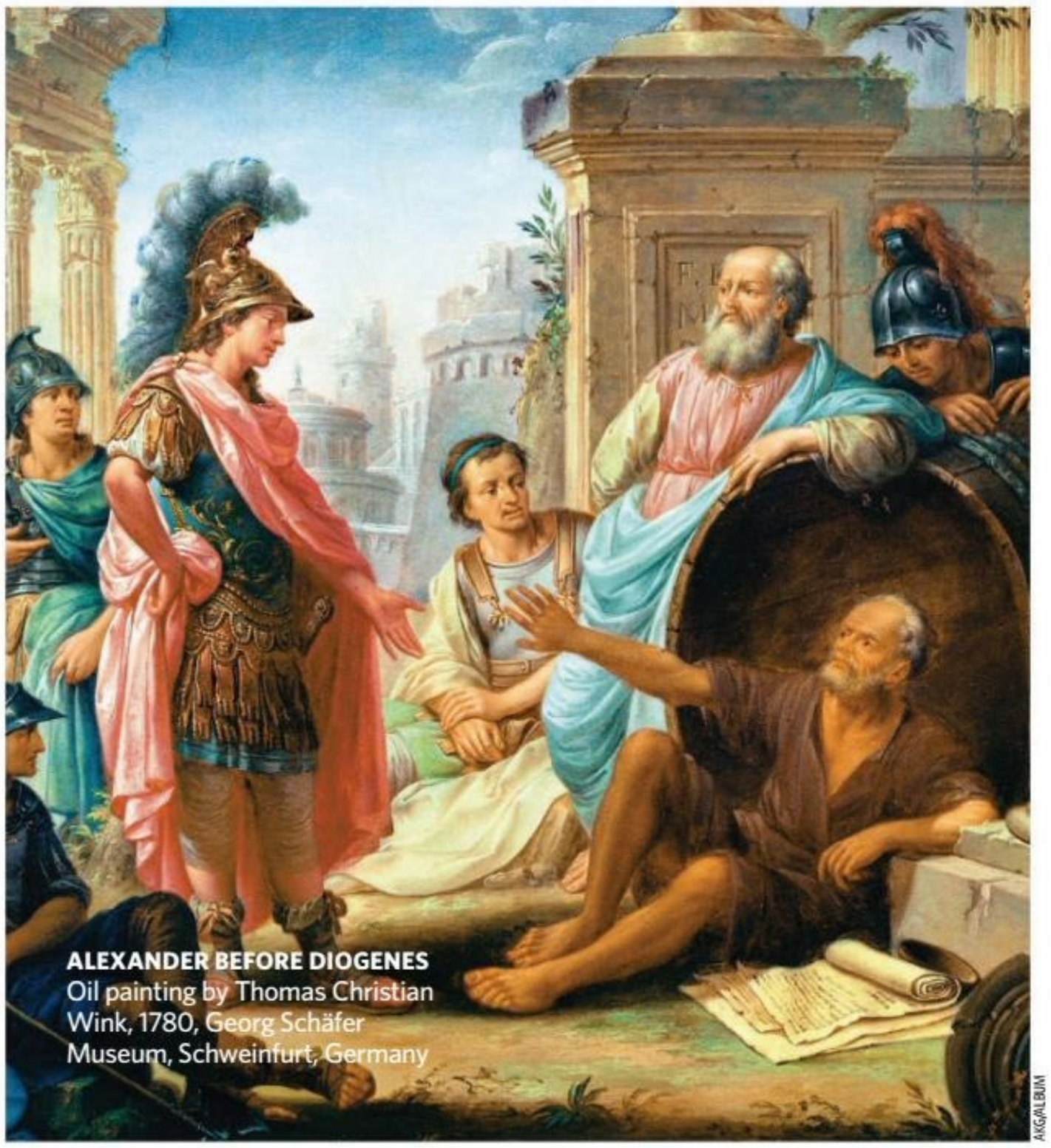


DIOGENES JEAN-LEÓN GÉRÔME, 1860, WALTERS ART MUSEUM, BALTIMORE

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

UNIMPRESSED BY GREATNESS

MANY HISTORICAL sources record one of the most celebrated moments in the philosopher's life: the encounter between Diogenes and Alexander the Great. Having been crowned ruler of the powerful kingdom of Macedonia, Alexander swept south through the Greek states, arriving in Corinth in 335 B.C. Hearing of the fame of the philosopher who slept in a barrel, the future emperor approached him and asked if he wanted for anything. Diogenes, who was enjoying the sunshine, snapped: "Yes, stand out of my light." Taken aback, but moved by his response, Alexander—who would, in time, become the most powerful man in the world—is reported to have observed: "If I were not Alexander, then I should wish to be Diogenes."



ALEXANDER BEFORE DIOGENES
Oil painting by Thomas Christian Wink, 1780, Georg Schäfer Museum, Schweinfurt, Germany

AKG/ALBUM

One day, according to an anecdote, Diogenes saw Plato arguing that man was "a two-legged animal without feathers." Diogenes returned with a chicken, plucked it and threw it into the school with a cry of "There goes a man, Plato!" Plato himself is reported to have said of Diogenes: "He is Socrates gone mad."

Life in Corinth

In accounts marked by colorful tales, and little in the way of facts, the story that Diogenes was captured by pirates, and sold to a man in Corinth, who employed him as his sons' tutor, strains credibility. True or not, it appears that Diogenes did indeed spend his last years in Corinth. A large terra-cotta wine jar or barrel served as his means of shelter when he lived there—perhaps the most recognizable and famous example of living his aesthetic principles. In artistic depictions, the figure of Diogenes is often shown sitting in or near a large barrel or earthen jar.

As he aged, friends advised him to relax the rigorous strictures he lived by. But Diogenes replied: "If I were running in the stadium, ought I to slacken my pace when approaching the end of the race? Ought I not rather to put on speed?"

In Corinth, tradition says that Diogenes met Alexander the Great. The two would share another connection: Diogenes Laertius says Diogenes died in 323 B.C., on the same day as Alexander the Great himself. The last speech attributed to him, addressed to Charon, ferryman of the underworld, is a farewell to life:

Receive me, even if your melancholy boat is heavy with the dead,
receive me, I say, the dog Diogenes.
A jar and a bag are my accompaniments, and my old Robe,
and that which convoys the dead—an obolous.
All things which I possessed among the living, all these I come to Pluto still bearing,
and I leave nothing under the sun.

Although he was said to have been a prolific author and speaker, none of Diogenes' actual writings survive to this day. However, his quest to expose the vices of his time has, not surprisingly, thrived through the ages. His message has inspired writers, including Shakespeare, Chekhov, and even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The thinking of Diogenes, and the wider Cynic school, had a profound impact on later philosophers. Christian scholars, while disapproving of his disavowal of shame, applauded the antimaterialism and self-sufficiency of a thinker who, even today, leaves few indifferent or unmoved.

—Juan Pablo Sánchez

Rococo Revolution: Marie-Antoinette's Courtier Couture

On the eve of the French Revolution, ladies at Versailles scrambled to keep up with the fashion standards set by the queen. Royal clothes formed an elaborate social code, inspired social unrest, and established France as a fashion capital.

Versailles was the center not only of French political power but also of French fashion. Since the reign of Louis XIV, French aristocrats looked to royalty to know what not to wear. The French court had been governed by strict rules that determined the proper type of frocks, fabrics, and accessories to be donned for the season, time of day, and occasion. Louis XIV's reign in the early 1700s was dominated by the baroque style of art, music, architecture, and haute couture. Ornate decorations, rich, dark fabrics, and elaborate, heavy designs dominated courtier couture under the Sun King.

After Louis XIV's death in 1715, clothing styles began to evolve. Fashion took a turn to a lighter, more frivolous style, transitioning from baroque to rococo. The latter period was characterized by pastel colors, more revealing frocks, and lots of frills, ruffles, bows, and lace. This look spread from France and was copied by the elite in other European capitals.

Costume Changes

Marie-Antoinette was an Austrian princess before she married Louis XVI in 1770. Clothing had always been a powerful signifier of nationality. When the young princess traveled from Austria to France to be married, her entourage stopped at the border between the two countries. There, Marie-Antoinette was stripped of all her Austrian clothes and dressed with clothing made in France. The ritual signified her transformation from Austrian to French.

After becoming queen in 1774, Marie-Antoinette embraced her new nation's passion for fashion. Her enthusiasm for clothing fit into the wider culture that reigned at Versailles. In the 18th century, it was every highborn lady's ambition to impress at court with her clothing, no small undertaking. The pressure of conspicuous consumption at Versailles, and the complex rules of fashion etiquette, dictated that women ought not wear the same outfit more than once—not, at least, without some carefully chosen, and costly, modification.

FANNING FERVOR

18TH-CENTURY FANS were rococo works of art. Artists painted elegant scenes on fans made of silk, paper, ivory, tortoiseshell, and hardwood sticks. Jewelers encrusted them with precious stones or embroidered them with gold and silver thread.

ROCOCO FRENCH FAN, 1730, CZARTORYSKI MUSEUM, KRAKOW

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

COMMAND PERFORMANCE
Marie-Antoinette gives a concert in this 1775 painting by Jean-Baptiste-André Gautier-Dagoty. Museum of Versailles

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

Bigger Is Better

The taste for spectacular women's clothing resulted in a return to exceptionally wide skirts held up by a frame underneath. Known as the *guardainfante*, a distinctive feature of earlier, 17th-century Spanish fashion, the skirt was initially designed to hide pregnancies. It was reimagined in the first half of the 18th century as the pannier, in an allusion to the skirt's inverted basket shape. Panniers could reach huge sizes, as much as 16 feet in diameter. This type of clothing was never intended to be comfortable or practical. For instance, two women could not pass one another in a doorway or sit beside one another in a carriage.

You are NOT going out dressed like that...

MARIA THERESA of Austria reacted with concern when she discovered her daughter Marie-Antoinette—recently arrived in France at the age of 14 to marry the future Louis XVI—had caught the French bug for wearing extravagant dresses.

On receiving a portrait of Marie-Antoinette, in which she was adorned in the most spectacular of finery, the Austrian empress wrote her daughter a stern letter of rebuke: "As you know, I have always been of the opinion that fashions should be followed in moderation but should never be taken to extremes. A beautiful young woman, a graceful queen, has no need for such madness. On the contrary, simplicity of dress is more befitting and more worthy of a queen. I love my little queen and watch everything you do and feel I must not hesitate to draw your attention to this little frivolity."

DECISIONS, DECISIONS . . .

EVERY MORNING, a maid brought Marie-Antoinette her kerchiefs and towels for the queen's morning toilette. Afterward, a maidservant held a book in front of her in which fabric samples of all the dresses in the royal wardrobe were pinned so the queen could choose what to wear that day.

CHINESE PORCELAIN PERFUME BOTTLE
18TH CENTURY, LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

THE PETIT TRIANON, the salon at Versailles where Marie-Antoinette could retire from the hustle and bustle of the court.

DAGLI ORTI/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Unlike the 17th-century guardainfante, the French pannier shifted the skirt's volume to the hips, an effect accentuated by the corset, which raised the bustline and narrowed the waist. It was tied at the back with straps, so a noblewoman needed a servant's help to get dressed. Her undergarments would have consisted of a long camisole that reached to her knees, and a petticoat that extended from the waist down to the ankles.

The best known variant of this court fashion was the *robe à la française* or sack-back gown, which came into its own in the 1740s in France when it was popularized by Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV. It had a less exaggerated shape than previous dresses, allowing for greater mobility. Madame de Pompadour favored frills and lace and liked to highlight her neck with velvet adorned with a flower or jewel.

A series of somewhat less formal women's dresses was introduced around the 1760s. One of these was the polonaise, which came into fashion during France's war with Poland. It had a tight-fitting body and was bulky at the back where it was gathered up with a cord. It was shorter than the French dress, allowed the underskirt and ankles to be seen, and was easier to move around in.

Another dress that became fashionable in France was the *robe à l'anglaise*, an example of the growing taste for all things English among well-to-do French. This dress included elements inspired by male fashion, such as a short jacket, broad lapels, and long sleeves. The redingote, for example—derived from the words "riding coat"—was halfway between a cape and an overcoat.

Accessories were just as important to a woman's appearance as her dress. At any official ceremony ladies were required to cover their hands and arms with gloves if their clothes were sleeveless. The dictates of fashion said that only in the summer could they wear gloves revealing half the length of their fingers.

The polonaise, a tighter, shorter dress, was gathered at the back.

POLONAISE FROM 1775, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

VANDA IMAGES/PHOTOAISA

Anatomy of a Dress

THE *ROBE À LA FRANÇAISE* was *the* hot trend for 18th-century European aristocrats. It had three parts: the gown, open at the front and ending in the train; the skirt; and the bodice. This embroidered silk and satin gown dates to 1760 and is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The long neckline can be U-shaped or square.
The elbow-length sleeves end in frills, sometimes of lace.
The bodice is finished with a triangular section, the *pièce d'estomac*.
The gown hugs the upper body and flares at the waist in an overskirt.
The skirt peeks through the opening in the gown.
Embroidered or printed floral motifs cover the silk fabric.
Goldwork and silverwork decorate the overskirt.
The back of the gown has broad folds and a small train.

SCALA, FLORENCE

One of the most important of all accessories was the fan. The culture of Versailles mingled flirtation with concealment, and fans were used to send flirtatious signals as part of a complex, gestural language of seduction.

The Business of Fashion

Underlying the frivolity of 18th-century French fashion were hard economics. The appetite for clothes among the French upper classes gave rise to a dynamic textile industry, which had been assiduously guarded by the protectionist policies introduced by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, minister to Louis XIV. The so-called royal manufactories helped foster a booming silk industry in Lyon. Technical progress and advances in dying further bolstered private enterprise, and factories turning out stockings, hats, and lingerie thrived. Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf's textile factory at Jouy-en-Josas, for example, employed some 900 workers in 1774.

Notable 18th-century French fashion designers included Marie-Jeanne Bertin, also known as "Rose," who pioneered French haute couture in the late 18th century. She opened her own fashion store in Paris in 1777, and quickly became the dressmaker of choice. Recognition of her talents was cemented by the Duchess of Chartres, who introduced her to Marie-Antoinette herself. The queen was so taken by her designs she had a workshop built for her in Versailles where Rose, her "Minister of Fashion," created ever more extravagant designs for the queen. Her creations were exported to courts in London, Venice, Vienna, Lisbon, and many other capitals.

Rose also created dolls attired in specially made clothes. These were bought by collectors, or sent as gifts to other European courts. These figurines also allowed foreign ladies to keep up with the French fashions and order the latest, most elegant dresses. Marie-Antoinette helped keep France the capital of European fashion throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

On one occasion, Joseph II of Austria commented that the elaborate wig worn by his sister Marie-Antoinette was "too light to bear a crown." It was understandable that the Austrian emperor would draw a parallel between his sister's style of dress and her role as queen: Marie-Antoinette's lavish wardrobe only increased her image as a frivolous spendthrift, one of the principal reasons why she became despised by the French people. This antipathy would eventually bring down the monarchy and lead her to the guillotine in 1793.

—María Pilar Queralt del Hierro

Vision of War: "The Third of May 1808 in Madrid"

Few painted the horrors of war with as much ferocity and humanity as Francisco de Goya. Documenting the conflict between Spain and France, Goya's 1814 work "The Third of May 1808" would echo through future works of modern art.

Crowds of Spanish citizens on May 2, 1808 surrounded and attacked occupying French troops in Madrid. The assailants were mainly working-class people, enraged by the inaction of the Spanish authorities before the French invasion. By the end of the day hundreds had been killed in the scuffles, along with dozens of Napoleonic troops. The response from Napoleon's lieutenant in Spain, Joachim Murat, was swift and ruthless. Many of the ringleaders were rounded up and executed by firing squad on May 2 and 3.

"SELF-PORTRAIT WITH SPECTACLES," GOYA, CIRCA 1800, MUSÉE GOYA, FRANCE

Placed alongside Napoleon's aggressive military expansion across Europe, Murat must have regarded the Madrid uprising as a trivial skirmish and assumed he had nipped any unrest in the bud. Instead of dissipating, however, the people's anger spread. Throughout 1808, French troops all over Spain suddenly found themselves facing an insurgency, which from 1812, was directly aided by the British.

If few imagined that May 2 would lead to the eventual expulsion of Napoleon's army from the Iberian Peninsula, they would have been no less astonished by another unforeseen consequence: the creation of one of the most influential works of modern art. These events inspired Francisco de Goya to paint "The Third of May 1808," a searing meditation on the barbarism of warfare.

Napoleon Takes Spain

In 1807, Napoleon had turned his attention to his archrival Britain, and especially to Britain's closest ally, Portugal. In order to seize Lisbon, the Portuguese capital, Napoleon had to cross neighboring Spain—at this stage, still an ally. To the alarm of the local Spanish population, French troops started to occupy key Spanish cities on their way. Violence between Spaniards and their former allies looked inevitable.

The Dead
Arms outstretched, these figures mirror the pose of the kneeling man. Their bodies lay on the hillside for days after.

"THE THIRD OF MAY 1808 IN MADRID"
OIL PAINTING BY FRANCISCO DE GOYA, 1814, PRADO MUSEUM, MADRID

Goya's Wartime Work

1807 Court painter to Charles IV of Spain, Goya witnesses the takeover of Spanish cities by Napoleonic troops.

1808 Napoleon's brother is crowned king of Spain. An admirer of French values, Goya recoils from French army atrocities.

1814 Spain's monarchy is restored under King Ferdinand VII. Goya paints his masterpiece, "The Third of May 1808."

1828 Goya's liberal ideals fall foul of the absolutist Ferdinand. He dies in exile in Bordeaux, France, at age 82.

The Kneeling Man
Goya's stocky Madrid worker strikes a Christ-like pose, a gesture conveying both submission and defiance.

The Condemned
They cover their eyes in terror. Goya's composition emphasizes the execution as a production line of slaughter.

The French Executioners
Painted in rigid, repeated lines, Goya's guns and bayonets foretell the impersonal nature of modern warfare.

The Lamp
Its powerful glow in a pre-electricity age is artistic license: It shines a light into a hidden place of injustice and cruelty.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

By spring 1808, it became clear that Napoleon wanted to control the whole Iberian Peninsula. His attempts to pressure the Spanish royal family to submit triggered the Madrid uprising. A month later, Napoleon was able to place a new king on the Spanish throne: his own brother, Joseph Bonaparte.

The insurgency that followed across Spain was remarkable for several reasons, not least that a ragtag army managed to rout one of history's greatest generals. It also gave rise to a new type of irregular warfare, led by untrained fighters who came to be known as guerrillas.

Goya's Dilemma

When Spain's monarchy was restored in 1814 under Ferdinand VII, not all Spaniards were cheering. Among these discontents was Goya himself. He was then in his late 60s. The burly court painter

COLD-BLOODED MESSAGE

JOACHIM MURAT, Napoleon's lieutenant in Spain, attempted to quell the uprising by swift executions. Prisoners were shot in various parts of the city, including the hill of Príncipe Pío, thought to be the setting of Goya's painting. Murat ordered that the bodies were to be left at the scene to serve as a chilling reminder of the cost of rebellion.

Bearing Witness to War

THE MODERN AGE IS ACCUSTOMED to graphic images of war, but Goya's series of etchings "The Disasters of War" still has the ability to profoundly shock and disturb. Produced between 1810 and 1814, while the war against Napoleon was ravaging Spain, Goya knew that his evenhanded refusal to glorify the Spanish patriots and depict the atrocities committed by both sides would be political dynamite. Finally published in 1863, 35 years after his death, "The Disasters of War" shows an artist transcending his own personal loyalties, to report, as Goya himself put it, "the actuality of events." The etchings' composition, stark realism, and sardonic, terse titles, create an effect that feels much closer to modern satire than anything else produced at the time. Plate 44 of the series shows a little boy looking back in horror at something happening just out of the frame. The caption below this etching could be the motto of all war correspondents ever since: "*Yo lo ví*—I saw it."

ORONOZ/ALBUM

SELF-PORTRAIT, GOYA, 1815, ACADEMIA DE SAN FERNANDO, MADRID

No. 3 "The Same"
Only uniforms distinguish the French from the Spanish. Squirming on the ground, the violence each visits on the other is equally bestial.

No. 19 "There Isn't Time Now"
A soldier sexually assaults one woman (left) while the two others will likely suffer the same fate.

No. 32 "Why?"
The tree is too low to hang this Spanish guerrilla. The French soldiers pull on his limbs so that he will choke to death.

PHOTOS: ORONOZ/ALBUM

THE RETURN OF THE KING

TO SOME SPANIARDS he was Ferdinand the Desired. To others he was Ferdinand the Felon. Restored to the throne in 1814, Ferdinand VII broke his promise to respect Spain's liberal constitution of 1812 and ruled with an iron fist. Despite his role as official court artist, Francisco de Goya had good grounds to distrust the king when he painted this portrait between 1814 and 1815. Around this time, the artist was being investigated by the Spanish Inquisition—an office that Joseph Bonaparte had abolished and Ferdinand had just restored. In 1824, alarmed by Ferdinand's increasingly repressive measures, Goya fled to France, where he died in 1828.

"KING FERDINAND VII WITH ROYAL MANTLE"
GOYA, 1814-15, PRADO MUSEUM, MADRID

SFGP/ALBUM

had fallen on hard times and found himself in an extremely delicate political situation. Whereas King Ferdinand was conservative and authoritarian, Goya had been openly supportive of Napoleon's liberal, Enlightenment values, and had even painted figures in Napoleon's regime.

Although he had longed for the progressive reforms promised by Napoleon, he also reviled the violence the French emperor had unleashed on Spain. During the insurgency, Goya had produced "The Disasters of War," a vivid series of etchings depicting brutal clashes between French troops and Spanish guerrillas as well as the horrific effects on the civilian population. Astonishingly for the period, the Spanish painter put his disgust with conflict and its catastrophic effects firmly above national loyalties; he revealed the indiscriminate savagery on both sides.

Now that the old regime had been restored, however, the artist needed a topic that would bring him back into the national fold without renouncing his belief in universal values of freedom and justice. He achieved this by painting two huge canvases depicting the tumultuous scenes in Madrid six years before. Completed in 1814, "The Second of May 1808 in Madrid" recounts the moment the uprising began. "The Third of May 1808 in Madrid" was his brutal account of the executions that followed.

The scene is set on the outskirts of Madrid. Bathed in an intense light from a large, square lantern, those awaiting execution cover their eyes against the unfolding horror. Unlike the firing squad—faceless and robotic—the stocky man about to be shot is revealed in his full humanity. Kneeling on a blood-soaked patch of ground, surrounded by bodies, and wearing loose, rumpled garments, "he is one of the most vivid presences in all art," wrote Goya's biographer, Robert Hughes, in 2006. "In an age of unremitting war . . . when our culture is saturated with endless images of torment, brutality, and death, he continues to haunt us."

Lasting Impressions

Few have been more haunted by him than another great Spanish painter, Pablo Picasso. Denouncing the barbarism of aerial bombardment during the Spanish Civil War, Picasso reimagined Goya's kneeling man for the 20th century, placing him on the right in his colossal 1937 antiwar mural, "Guernica." Today, a copy of Picasso's painting hangs at the United Nations in New York, where his version of Goya's figure is an enduring reminder to world leaders that wars may change, but the pain endured by its victims remains the same.

—Julius Purcell

Egypt's First City

MEMPHIS

Founded by the very first pharaoh, and sacred to Egypt's divine protector, the god Ptah, Memphis endured as Egypt's symbolic first city and the religious heart of its civilization for 3,000 years. Little in ancient Egypt is more ancient.

IRENE CORDÓN SOLÀ-SAGALÉS

The story of Memphis is, in many ways, the story of Egypt itself, a city that evolved and reinvented itself throughout the nation's long history. Surrounded by a white wall, dominated by its royal palace and vast temple to the god Ptah, Memphis was the country's political capital for the first millennium after Egypt's unification. Other cities would rise to take its place as the seat of administrative power, but Memphis never lost its importance as the symbolic and religious heart of Egyptian civilization. Very little of this ancient city remains despite its being the birthplace of one of the world's most remarkable cultures. Over time, its twisting streets, busy workshops, sacred temples, imposing palace, and busy port were all dismantled or buried, and the site now lies under the modern Egyptian town of Mit Rahina, on the banks of the Nile River, just south of modern-day Cairo.

REMAINS OF MEMPHIS
Servants carry offerings for the high official Ptahhotep, in this relief from his lavishly decorated tomb at Saqqara, one of the principal necropolises of Memphis.

KENNETH GARRETT

FIRST STEPS TO THE PYRAMIDS

Jutting over the sands west of Memphis, the stepped Pyramid of Djoser (above) was built nearly 4,600 years ago, and is the earliest of all Egypt's pyramids. On the right, in ruins, is the later Pyramid of Unas.

LOUIS-MARIE PREAU/GETTY IMAGES

According to tradition, Memphis was founded in the year 3100 B.C. by Menes, a legendary figure whom many modern Egyptologists identify as Narmer, the first pharaoh of Egypt's 1st dynasty. The emergence of the city on this site during or just after his reign was a logical outcome of recent political changes: the unification of Upper (southern) and Lower (northern) Egypt.

Memphis developed just south of where the Nile begins to branch into the delta, a strategic halfway point for Narmer's pharaoh successors, and a fitting seat of power from where they could wear the *pschent*—the dual crown, consisting of combined white and red headpieces, together symbolizing the new, united territory over which Memphis's rulers held dominion. Around this time, craftsmen created the Narmer Palette, a perfectly preserved piece of schist carved with historical scenes that associate the warrior-king Narmer himself with the fateful moment of unification.

The founders of Memphis, Tennessee, in the United States, chose to name their city for one of the oldest in human history. Memphis is, in fact, a Greek adaptation from Men-nefer, a name that might be related to the pyramid of Pharaoh Pepi I, which lies near the city. Since Pepi ruled sometime after Memphis was founded, the city was also known by older names.

According to Manetho, an

FROM NARMER TO ALEXANDER

3100 B.C.

Narmer, ruler of Upper (southern) Egypt, wins the long-running war with the north. Unifying the country, he becomes the first pharaoh, and establishes a new capital in Memphis on the Nile.

2125 B.C.

The 9th dynasty opens with Memphis losing power to Heracleopolis. A continuing conflict develops between Heracleopolis and the emerging capital of southern Egypt, Thebes.

NARMER PALETTE, 3000 B.C., DEPICTING THE UNIFICATION OF EGYPT. EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, CAIRO.

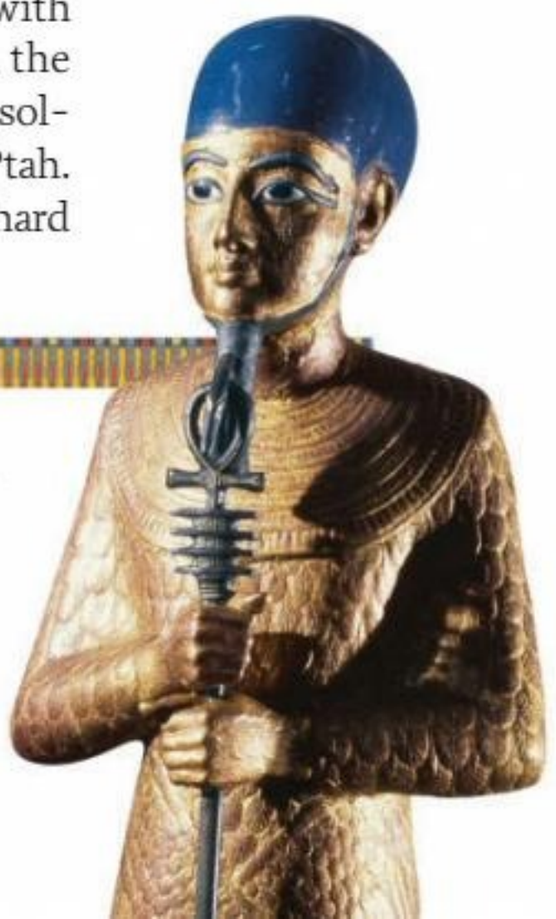
WERNER FORMAN/GTRES

Egyptian priest and scholar writing around 250 B.C., one ancient name for the city was Ineb-hedj—"the white wall"—in reference to the city's sacred retaining wall. Another name mentioned by Manetho references the god Ptah, for whom the city became associated: Hut-ka-Ptah, "mansion of the ka (soul) of Ptah." This name was later adapted into the Greek to become Aegyptia, or Egypt—yet another indication of the centrality of the city to Egypt's wider national story.

While other cities rose and fell across the huge span of Egyptian history, Memphis retained huge symbolic importance, and pharaohs continued leaving their mark on the city in the form of royal palaces right up until the period before Egypt's conquest by Alexander the Great. The city was especially important as a site for coronations. One ritual was the symbolic walking around—"circumambulation"—of the city wall, reenacting the route taken by the first pharaoh, King Narmer. Another coronation ritual, centering on the "union of the two lands," highlighted Memphis's role at the heart of Egypt's unity. Coronation ceremonies concluded with the new pharaoh receiving the double crown, along with the other symbols of Egyptian authority, the crook and the flail. This was followed by a solemn sacrifice to the city's patron divinity, Ptah. A lack of archaeological remains makes it hard

DIVINE ARCHITECT

Chief deity of Memphis, Ptah was patron of architects and masons. This gilded Ptah statue (below) was found in the tomb of Tutankhamun, the boy king. Egyptian Museum, Cairo



WERNER FORMAN/GETTIES

1279-1213 B.C.

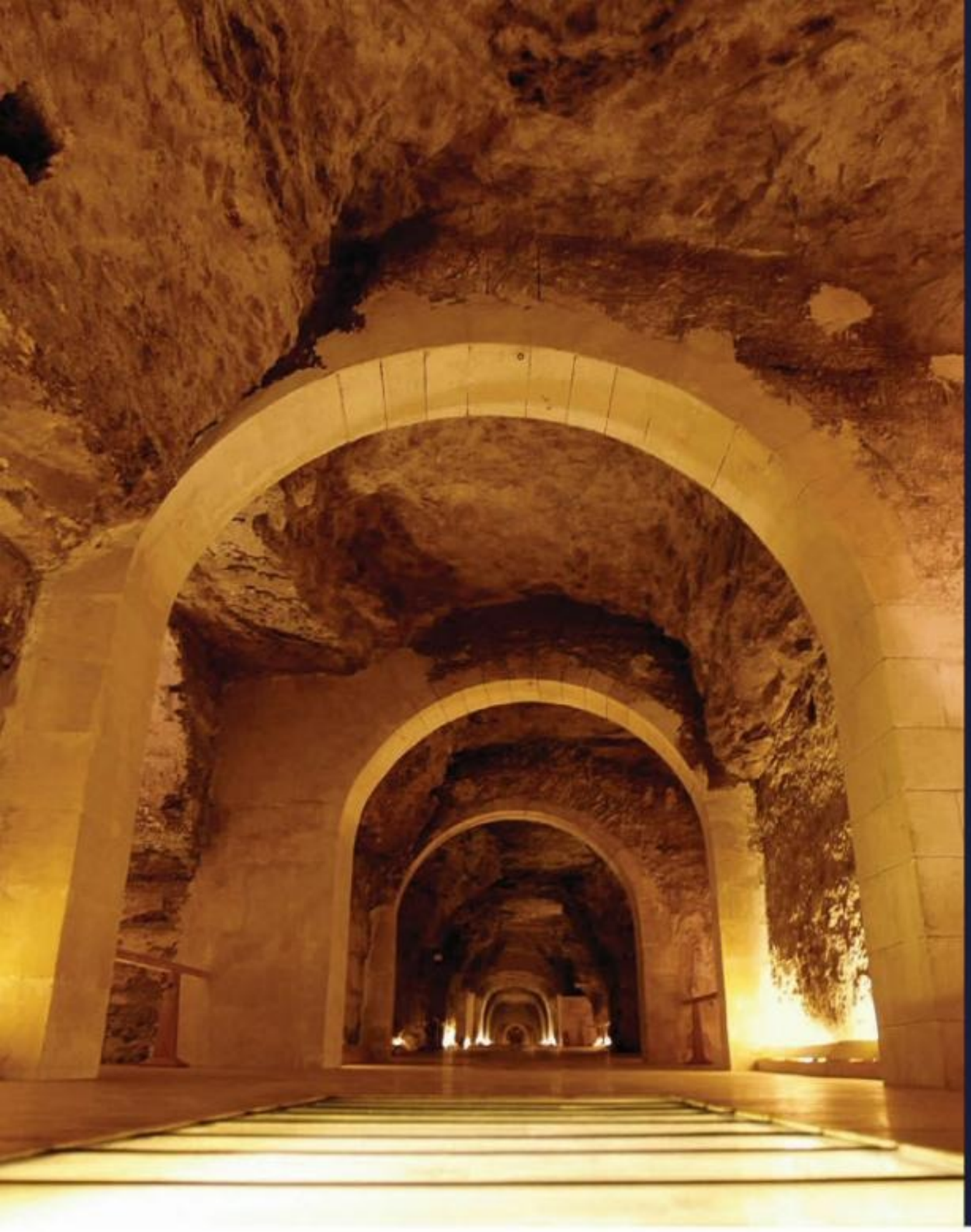
Ramses II restores Memphis's status as Egyptian capital. The king commissions lavish improvements to the city and to the Temple of Ptah, including new monuments and great statues of himself.

671 B.C.

Esarhaddon, the Assyrian monarch, begins his conquest of Egypt and clashes with Pharaoh Taharqa of the 25th dynasty. He reaches the gates of Memphis and successfully besieges the city.

332 B.C.

Alexander the Great conquers Egypt and founds Alexandria, which will become the new capital city after his death. Memphis declines and is abandoned by A.D. 640.



THE CULT OF APIS

THE SACRED BULLS OF MEMPHIS

The inhabitants of Memphis revered Apis, a bull closely associated with the city's principal deity, Ptah. Symbol of fertility, sexual potency, and physical strength, a real bull had to be found, showing certain very specific characteristics, which could then be chosen to represent Apis in its lifetime.

According to Herodotus, the Greek historian who traveled to Egypt during the fifth century B.C., the Apis bull had to be black and distinguished by 29 marks on its hide, among them a white triangle above the brow. On its back, it must have a white mark in the form of a vulture. The hair of the tail had to be divided in two and a beetle-shaped mark visible on its tongue. From as early as the first dynasties, the chosen bull lived in Memphis and enjoyed a sacred status. When an Apis bull died, Memphis would be plunged into mourning. The bull was mummified and, from around 1550 B.C., buried with great pomp in the Serapeum at Saqqara. Once buried, the priests would set out to scour the country until they found the new bull to take on the divine role of Apis.

HOLY COW

Built in the 13th century B.C. by Ramses II, the Serapeum (above) near Memphis is associated with the bull god, Apis. In the 1850s, 64 tombs of mummified Apis bulls were discovered here.

REUTERS/CORDON PRESS

to establish how Memphis may have looked. The basic material used for much of its early structures would have been the sun-dried bricks known as adobe—an economical and practical solution to city-building in antiquity.

Archaeologists assume the city would have been densely populated. Its royal palace was almost certainly brightly painted, adorned with columns, porticoes, and gardens filled with flowers, orchards, and ornamental ponds. Near the palace would stand the administrative buildings, and around these, the houses for the general population. In line with other excavated ancient Egyptian cities, these were likely two-story buildings lining long, narrow, irregular streets. The city's religious life centered on a specific quarter where the temples were, where the priests of Ptah lived, and where the archives and storehouses were located.

The splendor of Memphis was reflected in the lavish necropolises built nearby.

BLOCK STATUE, 12TH DYNASTY, SAQQARA, EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, CAIRO

WERNER FORMAN/GTRES

Ptah the Creator

The principal deity, and protector of the city—and, indeed, of the whole of Egypt—Ptah is represented as a bearded man wearing a blue skullcap and a tight robe. Fittingly for the patron god of a magnificent capital, he had special significance for builders and stonemasons. He was depicted bearing the scepter shaped into the form of the *djed* pillar—a device representing stability, and of deep importance to the religion developed at Memphis.

Thronging with worshippers, priests, and officials, the temple at Memphis was the largest dedicated to Ptah in Egypt, and may well have been one of the largest of all religious buildings in the world at the time.

The building must certainly have been grand, a fitting tribute to a deity held in reverence and awe. Ptah was no less than the god of creation,

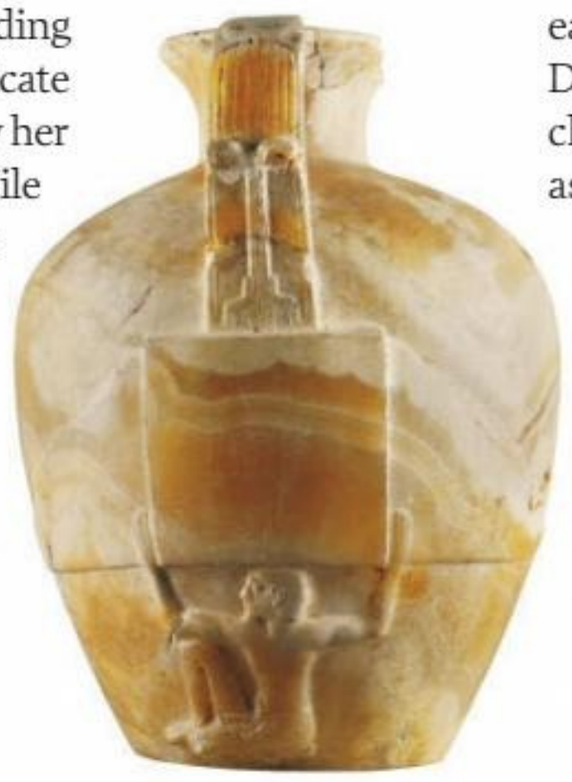
A NEW NECROPOLIS
By the 5th dynasty, Memphis's ancient necropolis of Saqqara was getting crowded, prompting Pharaoh Sahure to site his pyramid at nearby Abusir. In front is a porticoed area with the remains of eight columns.
REINHARD DIRSCHERL/GTRES

who brought the world into being by thought alone. Inscriptions on the Shabaka Stone, made sometime around the eighth century B.C., and held for a while at the temple at Memphis, credit Ptah's role in bringing about the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. In this way, Ptah, Memphis, and Egypt's greatness and unity, were all fused into one national narrative.

Ptah was, in fact, the principal of three gods worshipped in the capital. Under him in seniority came his wife, Sekhmet. In stark contrast to her rational husband, Sekhmet was a wrathful goddess with the head of a lioness. According to Egyptian mythology, she wanted to eradicate the human race for its impiety. Alarmed by her murderous rage, her father, Re, flooded the Nile with beer. Having drunk her fill, she slept for many days and awoke with her rage diminished.

The third of Memphis's divine triad is Ptah and Sekhmet's son, Nefertum. A youthful god, he was associated with the form, and perfume, of the blue lotus flower.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE
More than 40,000 vessels, including the one below, were found in Djoser's pyramid near Memphis. Many bear the names of Djoser's ancestors, suggesting they were "recycled" during his reign.
JEMOLO/AGE FOTOSTOCK



Life After Death

Once established in Memphis, the rulers of a united Egypt built new necropolises near their capital. The wealth and splendor associated with Memphis in the centuries ahead was reflected by the royal burial sites that sprang up around it in a radius of nearly 20 miles.

Among these very early tomb complexes are Abu-Roash, Zawyet el-Aryan, Abusir, and Dashur, all ranging from the 3rd to 6th dynasties. Nearby, at the necropolis of Saqqara, is one of the most remarkable monuments from the early dynastic period: the monument built by Djoser (2650-2575 B.C.), the first king who exclusively resided at Memphis, consolidating it as the political center of the kingdom.

The monument's construction was overseen by Djoser's chief minister, Imhotep. This gifted mathematician sparked a remarkable transformation in Egyptian architecture: Rejecting the flat-roofed monument of the early dynastic period, Imhotep opted instead for a six-stepped, stone-built pyramid, the form that would evolve and later define

THE OLD KINGDOM IN DECLINE

CHAOS REIGNS IN MEMPHIS

Following the long reign of Pepi II (who died around 2184 B.C.), disorder and famine seem to have engulfed Egypt, and central power in Memphis crumbled. Much of what is known from this period comes from a papyrus, written some 800 years later at the time of the Middle Kingdom, when unity and stability had been restored to Egypt under a series of strong kings. Known as the Admonitions of Ipuwer, it makes for a dramatic read: "Everywhere barley has perished and men are stripped of clothes, spice, and oil . . . the storehouse is empty and its keeper is stretched on the ground." These words have long colored the way scholars saw the decline of the Old Kingdom, but some historians now argue the text may have been part of a propaganda exercise, warning against a return to the "bad old days." Even so, while their effects might not have been as abrupt or dramatic as they were later presented, evidence of drought certainly exists. The loss of power from the pharaoh to the regional governors, known as nomarchs, also weakened Memphis's standing.

SPHINX FOR A QUEEN

Discovered in Memphis in 1912 by the British Egyptologist Flinders Petrie, this sphinx (above) is believed to be from the Ptah Temple. It represents the powerful 18th-dynasty queen Hatshepsut.

TOÑO LABRA/AGE FOTOSTOCK

ancient Egyptian culture. In the 5th dynasty, the Saqqara complex would be the resting place for high-ranking Memphis official Ptahhotep, who produced the Maxims, a collection of wise sayings extolling civic virtues among Egypt's young nobles. Reflecting the refinement of a cultured Memphis dweller, the walls of his tomb are decked with sumptuous, colorful art.

The most famous of the necropolises around Memphis is the 4th-dynasty site of Giza, celebrated throughout time for its three great pyramids built for the pharoahs Khufu (sometimes called Cheops), Khafre, and Menkaure. Nobles and high-ranking officials of Memphis occupied the site's smaller tombs.

Ramses II restored glory to Memphis, expanding and beautifying its monuments.

BREASTPLATE OF RAMSES II FOUND IN THE SERAPEUM NEAR MEMPHIS

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

An Enduring City

Memphis's role as the political capital lasted for a little under a millennium after the time of Narmer. A period of economic and political upheaval began in the 6th dynasty. Egypt entered a dark age, with little in the way of building, or recordkeeping that has survived. It is thought the last of the kings to rule in Memphis in that period was from the 8th dynasty. With the accession of the 9th dynasty, the seat of Egyptian power shifted south to Heracleopolis.

During this time, known as the First Intermediate Period (2130-2080 B.C.), Egypt fell into disunity, and little is known of what happened to Memphis. Mirroring the changing fortunes of Egypt itself, Memphis's star was fated to fall and rise in the course of the many centuries that lay ahead.

During the 12th dynasty, for example, when Egyptian unity was restored, Amenemhet I moved his royal residence to near Memphis. Later, however, from around 1630 B.C. onward, northern Egypt was invaded by an Asian people known as the Hyksos. By the time they

were driven out and Egyptian unity restored once more, a new, rival candidate for the capital city had emerged much farther to the south: Thebes, which entered its heyday at the time of Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1390–1353 B.C.), with the growth of the fabulous funerary complexes of Karnak and Luxor.

Yet when Thebes started its decline toward the end of the 20th dynasty, Memphis enjoyed something of a revival. Before establishing his own capital at Pi-Ramses, Ramses II briefly restored Memphis as capital of Egypt. The great pharaoh also paid homage to its religious legacy by rebuilding the Temple of Ptah.

Memphis was a crucial prize during the waves of invasions that beset Egypt as the once indomitable empire lost its grip on regional power. The Assyrian king Esarhaddon destroyed Memphis in 671 B.C.; a century later, the city fell to the Persian emperor Cambyses II, the successor to Cyrus the Great.

Following the death of Alexander the Great in Babylon in 323 B.C., his body was intercepted by his general, Ptolemy I Soter. As Ptolemy had inherited Alexander's Egyptian domains, he brought the body of the emperor back to the Nile territories over which his dynasty would rule for the next three centuries.

Ptolemy had Alexander buried at Memphis. Later, his body was disinterred by Ptolemy's son and taken to its final resting place in Alexandria. This reburial marked the end of Memphis's significance, as it was soon to be eclipsed by the port that bore Alexander's name.

For years, the location of the city was a mystery until the arrival in Egypt in 1798 of another of history's great generals: Napoleon. Soon after, French scholars established Mit Rahina as the site of the ancient capital. Since then, a colossus of Ramses II and some fragments from the 5,000-year-old wall are among the few remains that have been found of the former capital city—so far, at least. Although layers of Nile sediment have smothered its mud-built structures, archaeologists hope that one day Memphis might yield more clues to its ancient past. ■

IRENE CORDÓN SOLÀ-SAGALÉS IS A SPECIALIST ON THE ANCIENT TOMB-BUILDING COMMUNITY OF DEIR EL MEDINA, ABOUT WHICH SHE HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY.

DAILY LIFE IN THE AFTERLIFE

A relief (above) from the tomb of the 5th-dynasty official Ti, in Saqqara, shows construction workers in Ti's employ. Ti served the pharaoh Neuserre, who ruled at the height of Memphis's power.

DEA/AGE FOTOSTOCK

MONUMENTS OF MEMPHIS

SOUTHERN SAQQARA
The flat-roofed tomb of Shepseskaf (4th dynasty) and the pyramids of Pepi II (6th dynasty) and Qakare (8th dynasty)

CENTRAL SAQQARA
Also in the southern Saqqara complex, the pyramids of Djedkare (5th dynasty) and Pepi I and Merenre I (6th dynasty)

NORTHERN SAQQARA
The great funerary complex of Djoser (3rd dynasty) was built here, as well as those of Unas and Teti.

ABUSIR
Some 5th-dynasty pharaohs preferred to locate pyramids here. Userkaf and Neuserre built temples to the sun.

TEMPLE OF HATHOR
Built by Ramses II, this small temple was dedicated to the goddess Hathor, worshipped in the form of a cow.

CANAL
Linking the temples of the goddess Hathor and Ptah. Waterborne processions were held along its course.

REIMAGINING EGYPT'S FIRST CITY

This reconstruction of ancient Memphis is based on recent archaeological investigations that identified structures from the New Kingdom (circa 1539 - 1075 B.C.) and the Late Period (circa 715-332 B.C.). Among the most remarkable is the Temple of Ptah, where Ramses II added a hypostyle hall. Apries, a pharaoh of the 26th dynasty, erected a palace next to the temple. Nearby lay the necropolises of Saqqara and Abusir, where rulers from the Old Kingdom (circa 2575-2150 B.C.) built their monuments.

TEMPLE OF PTAH
One of the most important religious sites in Egypt, and seat of the god Ptah. Ramses II added a magnificent hypostyle hall.

PALACE OF MERNEPTAH
The son and successor of Ramses II once again established the capital at Memphis, where he built a huge palace.

PALACE OF APRIES
This 26th-dynasty pharaoh built a palace here, showing Memphis's enduring importance through the Late Period.

TEMPLE OF SETI I
The father of Ramses II also left his mark on Memphis, building his own temple here, along with other buildings.

WATERCOLOR BY JEAN-CLAUDE GOLVIN. MUSÉE DÉPARTEMENTAL ARLES ANTIQUE. © ÉDITIONS ERRANCE

LONG LASTING

The remains of Persepolis, capital of the Persian Empire, sit at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat ("mountain of mercy") in present-day Iran. Darius I founded the city in 518 B.C. and built an immense palace, whose ruins still stand today.

SIMON NORFOLK/NB PICTURES/CONTACTO

DAWN OF PERSIA

THE AGE OF EMPIRES BEGINS

Under the rule of Cyrus II, the Persian Empire became the world's first superpower, stretching from Europe to the edge of India and filled with a vast patchwork of languages, cultures, and religions. The empire lasted just over two centuries, leaving behind an impressive legacy.

JAIME ALVAR EZQUERRA

The Empire's Rise and Fall

585 B.C.

Astyages becomes king of Media. His daughter, Mandane, marries Cambyses I, king of Persia. Mandane gives birth to a son, Cyrus I.

559 B.C.

The crowning of Cyrus II is held while his father is still alive. Historians use this date to mark the beginning of the Persian Empire.

550-539 B.C.

Cyrus conquers the kingdoms of Media and Lydia. He extends Persian control over the Greek territory of Ionia (in modern-day Turkey) followed by Babylon.

529-522 B.C.

Cambyses II comes to power after Cyrus's death. His forces defeat Egypt in 525 B.C., but he dies under mysterious circumstances in 522.

522-486 B.C.

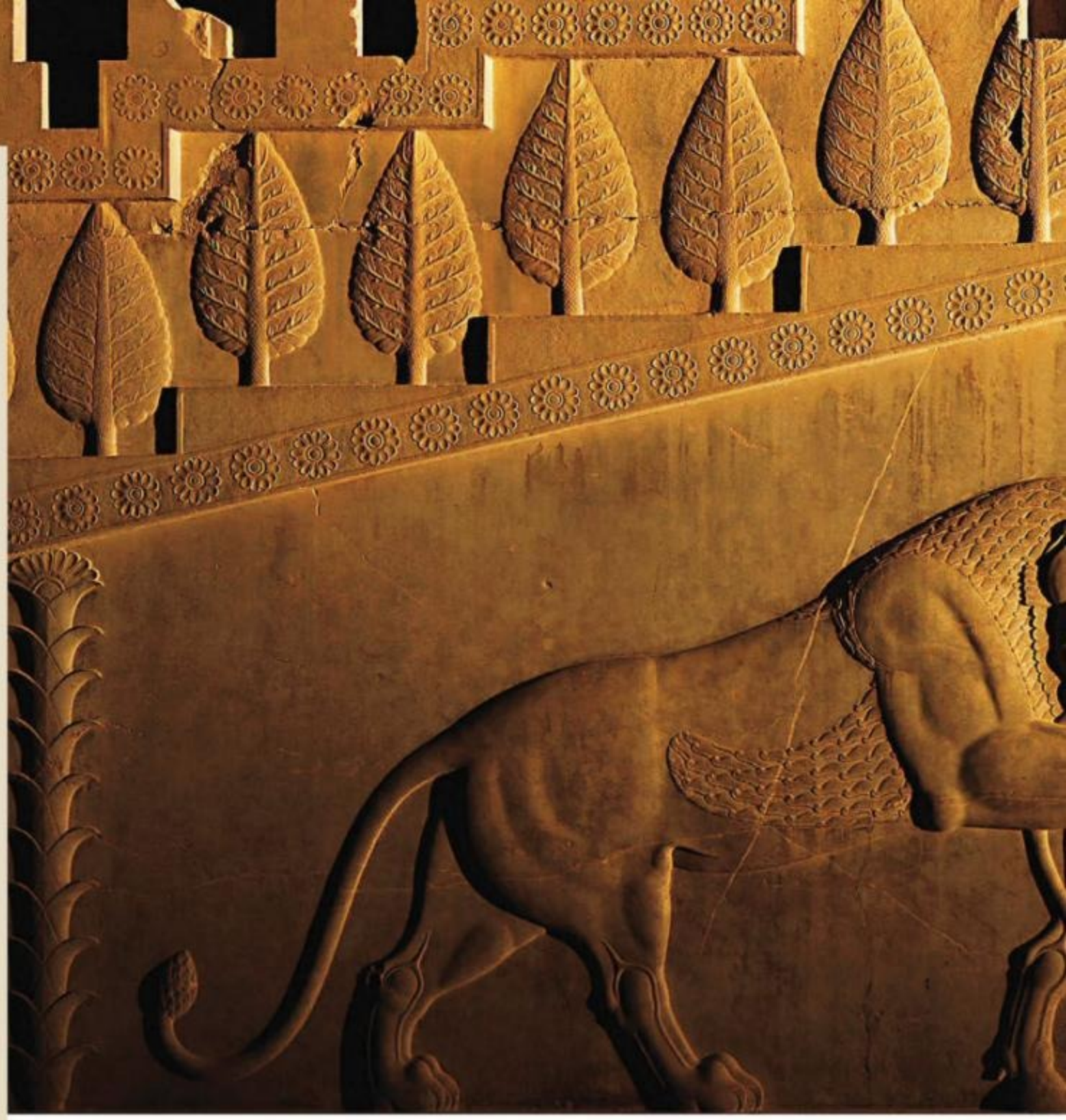
During his reign, Darius I consolidates and adds to the empire's territory while improving its administration. He founds Persepolis in 518 B.C.

486-465 B.C.

The reign of Xerxes I is marked by attempts to conquer Greece. A naval defeat at Salamis in 480 B.C. heralds the decline of Persian power in the Aegean.

330 B.C.

Alexander the Great conquers the Persian Empire, bringing its era of international dominance to a close.



UNITING TWO KINGDOMS

Distinguished by their headdresses, Median and Persian soldiers parade across this relief from the Apadana (Audience Hall) at Persepolis (above), illustrating how the empire valued diversity.

SIMON NORFOLK/NB PICTURES/CONTACTO

I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world . . . Found on a cylindrical tablet in the 19th century, these words commemorate Persia's conquest of Babylonia and the taking of its capital city, Babylon, in 539 B.C.

After Cyrus came to power in 559 B.C., Persia expanded its holdings to become the world's original empire. Previously, other peoples such as the Assyrians had held sway over vast tracts of Mesopotamia, but none had reached the geographical extent as Persia, whose territory stretched from eastern Europe to the Indus River. Strengthening the empire, Cyrus's policy of tolerance toward the conquered allowed local peoples to maintain their languages, traditions, and religions, which in turn allowed Persian culture to benefit from a truly global exchange.

Cyrus's construction of an imperial identity made up of many religions and languages continues to inspire the modern world. As the Greek historian Xenophon wrote, "Cyrus eclipsed all other monarchs, before or since."

Origins of Empire

When crowned king of Persia in 559 B.C., Cyrus II was little more than a tribal leader of the Parsua (Persian) people who lived in the south of present-day Iran. The latest ruler in the Achaemenian dynasty, Cyrus inherited a kingdom that was effectively a vassal state of the more powerful Median empire to the north.

In 612 B.C., the Medes had taken the Assyrian capital Nineveh, giving them control of a territory that stretched across Mesopotamia. Later, at the height of his power, the Median king Astyages decided to marry his daughter, Mandane, to the king of Persia, Cambyses I, in the 580s B.C. Their son, Cyrus II, would rise up to not only conquer the Medes but also build the world's first true empire.

A famous tale about Cyrus's birth comes from the Greek historian Herodotus, writing about a century after the king's death. His account mirrors several Greek myths, such as the story of Oedipus, in which a prophecy of being overthrown by a son causes a king to try (and often fail) to thwart fate by killing the child. Herodotus tells how King Astyages had a dream in which his daughter Mandane "urinated so much that the urine filled his city, then went on to flood all of Asia."

The king consulted his sages. They interpreted the dream as an omen that his grandson would one day conquer the Medes. To challenge the prophecy, Astyages married his daughter to a Persian ruler, so her offspring could not take the Median throne. Later, however, Astyages dreamed that a vine grew from his daughter's genitalia and spread over Asia. Alarmed, the king placed his daughter under guard.

After Cyrus's birth, the legend goes, Astyages ordered his general Harpagus to kill the baby. But instead of carrying out the murder himself, Harpagus handed over the newborn to a shepherd, asking him to abandon the baby in the mountains. The shepherd's wife was grieving, as she had just had a stillborn child, so the shepherd brought the baby Cyrus home with him. The couple adopted

TREASURE BY THE OXUS

Cyrus crossed the Oxus River to conquer modern-day Afghanistan. Persian gold was found near the river in the 1870s, including this griffin-headed armlet (below). British Museum, London

WERNER FORMAN/GTRES

MOUNTAIN MAUSOLEUM

Naqsh-e Rostam, near Persepolis in modern-day Iran, is a necropolis of mainly rock-cut tombs named for the Persian epic hero Rostam. Darius I was laid to rest here, along with later Persian kings. Two centuries after the founding of the Persian Empire, it is believed the tombs were looted by troops of Alexander the Great.

SIMON NORFOLK/NB PICTURES/CONTACTO

BUREAUCRACY AND RELIGION

A TOLERANT KING

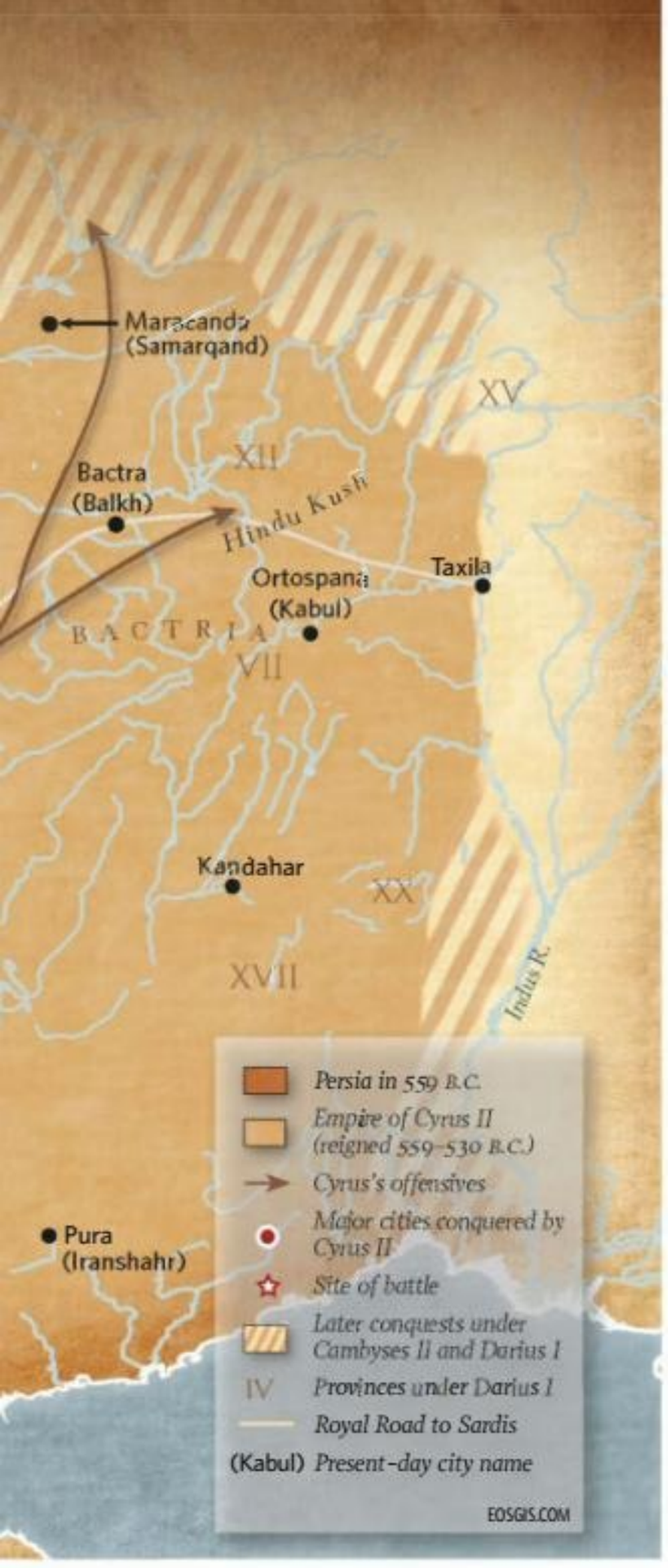
Cyrus's spectacular conquests forced him to create an administration fit for an empire. Inspired by the sophisticated model of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Cyrus created a network of public administration and tax collection while recruiting the best military generals from among the Medes. Following the conquest of Lydia and the Greek cities of Ionia in the west of modern-day Turkey, the Persian administration was split up into provinces. Later, Babylonia and the other conquered areas were also converted into provinces, ruled by satraps, or governors, a system later completed under Darius I. Remarkably, Cyrus had no intention of imposing Persian religion, language, or culture on his new conquests. His style of government was based on respect for the many peoples over whom he reigned, and tolerance toward their customs and religions, setting him apart from earlier empire builders. Displaced peoples were allowed to return to their homes—most famously in the case of the Jews exiled in Babylon, to whom Cyrus gave his blessing to return to Jerusalem. Local governors could conserve their autonomy, provided that they paid respect, and tribute, to the great king.

him after placing the body of their own dead son on the mountainside instead.

The Road to Sardis

Herodotus's story clearly includes many mythical elements, but—as with many legends—contains a kernel of truth. Later in life, Cyrus did indeed threaten his powerful grandfather Astyages when he invaded Media in 550 B.C. Astyages's general, who really was called Harpagus, did indeed betray his king, by defecting to Cyrus's side, allowing the Persian king to seize the Median capital, Ecbatana.

From this moment, Herodotus recounts, the Persians and Medes were united under Cyrus II, soon to be known as Cyrus the Great. With Ecbatana under his belt, Cyrus turned his attentions to the kingdom of Lydia, in modern-day Turkey. Lydia was certainly a tempting prize: Renowned for commerce, the Lydians invented the basis for the metal coinage system still in use today. In 547 B.C., the Lydian king Croesus made incursions into Median territory, providing Cyrus with the perfect excuse for



invasion. According to the Babylonian Chronicles—the Persian account of this period, later set down on clay tablets—Cyrus crossed the Tigris River, and marched to the Lydian capital, Sardis, along what would become the famous Royal Road, later built by Darius I to link Sardis with key cities across the Persian Empire.

A first, indecisive clash with the Lydians took place at Pteria, in what is today northern Turkey. Following the battle, Croesus withdrew his troops to their winter barracks and urged his allies—the Spartans, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians—to send reinforcements in spring. Cyrus, however, chose to risk an immediate attack on Croesus. His military commander, Harpagus, pulled off a stunning Persian victory, placing Sardis and its treasure into the hands of the Persian emperor. Shortly afterward, Cyrus extended his control over the Ionian Greek cities along the western coast of modern-day Turkey.

The next decade of Cyrus's reign was dedicated to expanding the eastern empire. Placing this territory under his control gave Cyrus control over the caravan trading routes. His campaigns took him as far as Bactria in modern-day Afghanistan, eventually reaching Maracanda, today known as Samarqand, in Uzbekistan.

By the Waters of Babylon

With operations successfully tied up in the east, Cyrus set his sights on the greatest prize of all: Babylon, capital of Mesopotamia. The internal politics of Babylon at this moment could not have been more favorable for the Persians to strike. Nabonidus, the Babylonian king, had lost the confidence of the priests of Marduk, the city's principal deity, because they believed that the king was denigrating the religious rites of the city.

Cyrus intuitively grasped that respect toward the diversity of religious customs in the huge territories under his command was a key ingredient of imperial stability. This policy only consolidated his power. The Cyrus Cylinder tells how Marduk sought an "upright king . . . [and] he took the hand of Cyrus . . . and called him by his name, proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything." The

THE PERSIANS MOVE WEST

Persia conquered the city Miletus (in modern Turkey) after the fall of Lydia. The theater there (above) was built in the fourth to second centuries B.C. and later restored by the Romans.

YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND/CORBIS/GETTY

Just over eight inches in length, the Cyrus Cylinder is made of baked clay, and engraved with Babylonian cuneiform. Dating to the sixth century B.C., it was discovered in 1879 in Babylon and is now held at the British Museum.

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

The Cyrus Cylinder

IN 1879, the archaeologist Hormuzd Rassam found a corncob-shaped clay cylinder embedded in the ruins of Babylon, near Baghdad. Broken in several places, the 36 intact lines of cuneiform text on its curved surface caused a sensation when the artifact was brought back to the British Museum in London. The translation revealed a declaration by Cyrus the Great following his conquest of Babylon in 539 B.C. The Cyrus Cylinder portrays this event as a liberation carried out with the blessing of Babylon's own deity, Marduk, who favored King Cyrus for his justness. One line in particular seems to corroborate the biblical version of the return of the exiled Jews to Jerusalem: "I collected together all of their peoples and returned them to their settlements." Although many historians caution against seeing the cylinder as some kind of forerunner to a "charter of rights," Cyrus's shrewd sensitivity to the cultural and religious diversity of his empire touches a contemporary nerve. Neil MacGregor, director of the British Museum, describes the cylinder as "a link to a past which we all share, and to a key moment in history that has shaped the world around us."

A GREAT KING'S SIMPLE TOMB

In 530 B.C., Cyrus's body was borne to the Persian capital Pasargadae, and placed in this simple monument built on a stepped plinth. In the medieval period, the tomb was used as a mosque.

SIMON NORFOLK/NB PICTURES/CONTACTO

PERSIA'S URBAN LUXURY

PARADISE CITIES

Although he ruled Babylon, the greatest city in Mesopotamia, Cyrus longed to found his own capital in Persia. The construction of Pasargadae began in 546 B.C., but it was still unfinished when the body of the emperor, killed in battle, arrived there for burial, and was eventually interred just outside, in the step-based monument that dominates the plain. The city boasted two royal palaces and an extensive, walled hunting park with wild animals roaming free. This park, or garden, was known in Persian as a *pardes*—from which the English "paradise" derives. The Persians were not especially accomplished builders during this period, so Cyrus used manpower and expertise from among the peoples he conquered. Despite its attractions, Pasargadae was abandoned when Darius I, successor of Cambyses II, founded Persepolis nearby, a city that became a byword for luxury. When the 16th-century English writer Christopher Marlowe wanted to evoke the wonders of majesty in his play *Tamburlaine the Great,* he has the title character proclaim: "Is it not brave to be a king / and ride in triumph through Persepolis?"

cylinder describes the Babylonians' reception of Cyrus as a liberator in the fall of 539 B.C.

The priests of Marduk were not the only ones to celebrate Cyrus's conquest of Babylon. Many Jews had been living in captivity in Babylon since Nebuchadrezzar II had brought them there following his conquest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The arrival of Cyrus forms the backdrop to the stories of Daniel in the biblical book Apocrypha. The emperor's decision to repatriate the Jews to Jerusalem is yet another example of Cyrus's embrace of multiculturalism, earning him a eulogy in the Bible itself: "Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped," wrote the Prophet Isaiah, one of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, "to subdue nations before him and ungird the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed."

Cyrus had reached the pinnacle of his power. He did indeed seem, as the Cyrus Cylinder claims, to have become "King of the World." Following this victory, kings from across Asia scrambled to pay homage to him, the leader who had created the largest empire the world had ever

seen. Written in cuneiform, the Cyrus Cylinder recounts how sovereigns from the Upper Sea (the Mediterranean) to the Lower Sea (the Persian Gulf) came to offer tribute to Cyrus in Babylon and kiss his feet.

Pax Persiana

If the rise of the Persian emperor was stellar, his end was a grim anticlimax. In 530 B.C., when he was approaching his 60s, Cyrus led a campaign to the northeastern frontier of his empire. According to Herodotus, he believed that "against whatever country he turned his arms, it was impossible for that people to escape."

Do Herodotus's words hint at hubris? Cyrus was killed during a battle against a local tribe, the Massagetae. According to the Greek historian, the queen of the tribe, Tomyris, had lost her own son in the battle and plunged the emperor's severed head in a pail of blood.

Cyrus's gruesome end did not diminish his astonishing legacy, nor did it stall the ongoing expansion of his already colossal empire. His immediate successor, Cambyses II, conquered Egypt, establishing its 27th dynasty. Attempts by Cambyses to push even farther afield into Ethiopia, and west toward Carthage, were frustrated, and it was left to his successor, Darius I, to take the Persian Empire to its widest span, conquering the Indus Valley and crossing the Danube into Europe.

The son of a provincial governor, Darius had to prove his mettle by quashing numerous revolts. But his greatest legacy was his administrative genius: His schemes to standardize weights and coinage across his vast territories became a blueprint for the world's future empires. Continuing the religious policy set by Cyrus, faiths within the empire were allowed to flourish, including those of the Jews and the Egyptians.

Darius's bid for westward expansion was checked at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. The failure by his successor, Xerxes I, to break the Greeks at the Battle of Salamis a decade later, opened a new chapter in world history: the flourishing of fifth-century B.C. Athens. ■

A PROFESSOR AT THE CARLOS III UNIVERSITY OF MADRID IN SPAIN, JAIME ALVAR EZQUERRA SPECIALIZES IN THE HISTORY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ASIA.

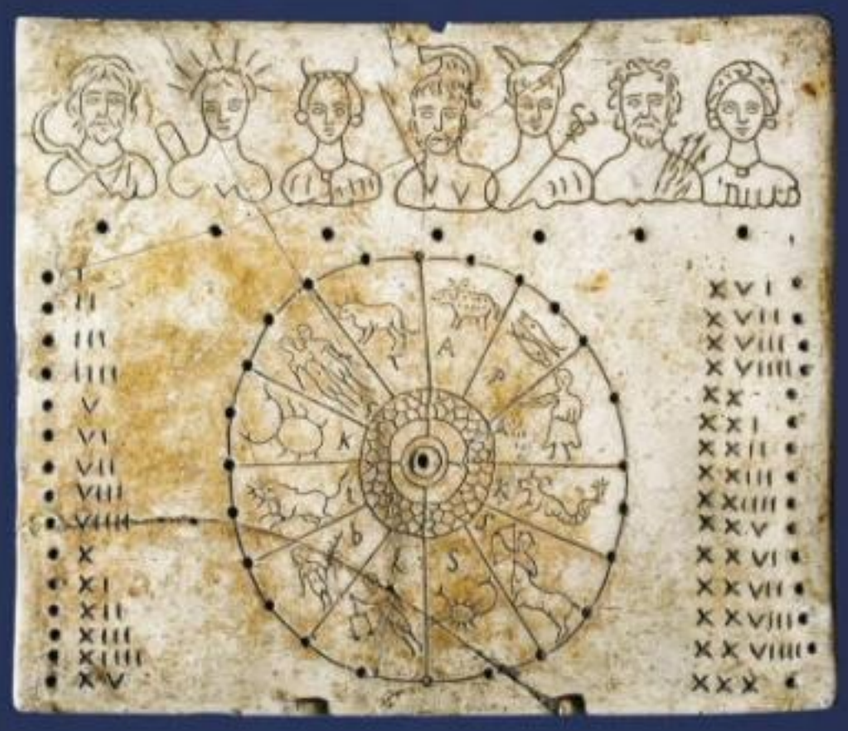
A MOTHER'S REVENGE

Jean-Simon Berthélemy's 18th-century canvas "The Beheading of Cyrus II" shows Queen Tomyris watching as the emperor's head is plunged into a pail of blood to avenge her son. Musée des Beaux Arts, Nîmes

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

HOLDING HEAVEN AND EARTH
Atlas carries the universe, replete with zodiac signs, in this Roman copy of a Greek sculpture, at the Naples National Archaeological Museum. Far right, a Roman zodiacal calendar, scratched into marble, from the first century A.D.

ATLAS: FOGLIA/SCALA, FLORENCE
CALENDAR: AKG/ALBUM



Astrology in the Ancient World

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

From Babylonia to Rome, many ancient civilizations believed that the stars could predict the future. The meticulous heavenly observations of early astrologers laid a strong scientific foundation for astronomers yet to come.

PALOMA ORTIZ GARCÍA

> If, then, a man knows accurately the movements of all the stars, the Sun, and the Moon, so that neither the place nor the time of any of their configurations escapes his notice, . . . Why can he not, too, with respect to an individual man, perceive the general quality of his temperament from the ambient at the time of his birth?"

This writer, describing his belief that heavenly bodies can determine human characteristics, was no mystic magician. He was Claudius Ptolemy, one of the most renowned mathematicians and thinkers of the ancient world. In his lifetime, the middle of the second century A.D., astrology was serious science. Using the heavens to study human life was common practice, from the centers of power, such as Rome, to the centers of learning, such as Alexandria, a city on the cutting edge of mathematical, scientific, and medical knowledge.

THE STARS OF SALAMANCA

Zodiacal images adorn a ceiling painted by Fernando Gallego in the 1480s at the University of Salamanca, Spain—a reminder of the centrality of astrology to learning in the Renaissance.

ORONOZ/ALBUM

Although still popular today, astrology is considered to have no place in scientific thought. People may know their sun sign and casually read their daily horoscope, but few consider astrology a science. In Greek, the word "astrology" means "study of the telling of the stars," while the term "astronomy," also from the Greek, means "study of the placement of stars." Today, astronomy is a scientific discipline, whereas astrology is a superstition. Despite these distinctions, the two terms were, in practice, often used interchangeably for much of classical history.

Ptolemy's study of astrology was closely related to the progress of astronomy. Observing the movement of astral bodies—the sun, the moon, the stars and planets—to tell the fortunes of human beings required skilled observation. The detailed measurements and conjectures left by Ptolemy were of huge importance to later scientists, and part of the legacy that enabled Galileo to make his groundbreaking astronomical discoveries in the 17th century.

Ptolemy's influential publications, however, did seem to establish a distinction between astronomy and astrology. The last five chapters of his *Almagest* (circa A.D. 150), a weighty tome on mathematics and astronomy, provide detailed models for the five visible planets, together with tables to predict their motion.

In his third major study, Ptolemy turned to astrology. In the four-volume work known as the *Tetrabiblos,* Ptolemy admits that astrology

FROM BABYLON TO ROME

circa 490 B.C.
Babylonian astronomer Nabu-rimanni creates tables on the motion of the sun and planets, data then used to predict earthly events.

circa 290 B.C.
Alexander's conquests open up Babylonian scholarship to the Greeks. The astrological works of Berossus deeply influence Greek writers.

CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY 15TH-CENTURY PORTRAIT BY JUSTUS VAN GENT, LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

WHITE IMAGES/SCALA, FLORENCE

EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN

The will of the Olympian gods, such as Pallas Athena—to whom the Parthenon in Athens was dedicated—or her brother, the sun god Apollo, linked the heavens with the fate of mortals on Earth.

CHRISTIAN GOUPI/AGE FOTOSTOCK

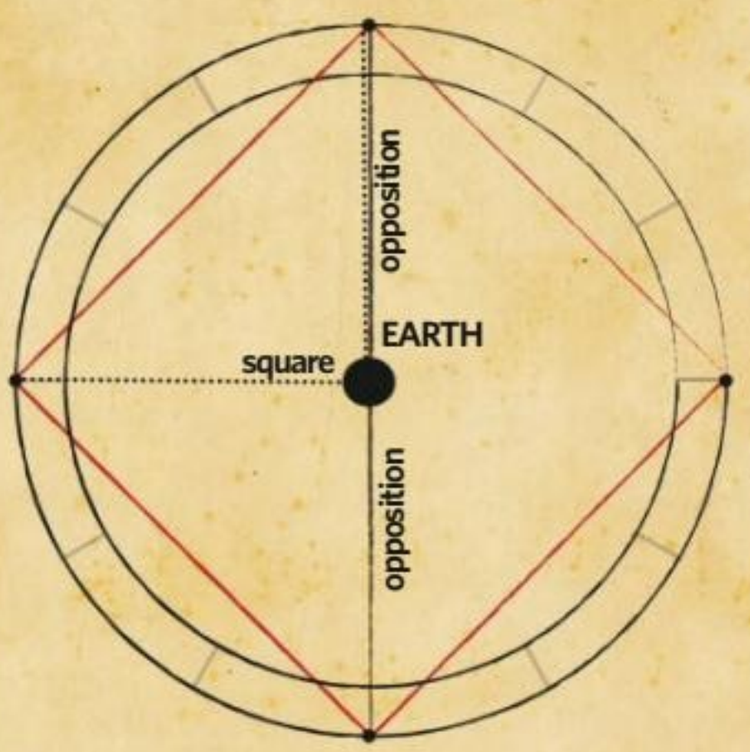
A.D. 14-27
Marcus Manilius's long poem *Astronomica* reveals the voluminous astrological knowledge the Roman world had inherited from Greece.

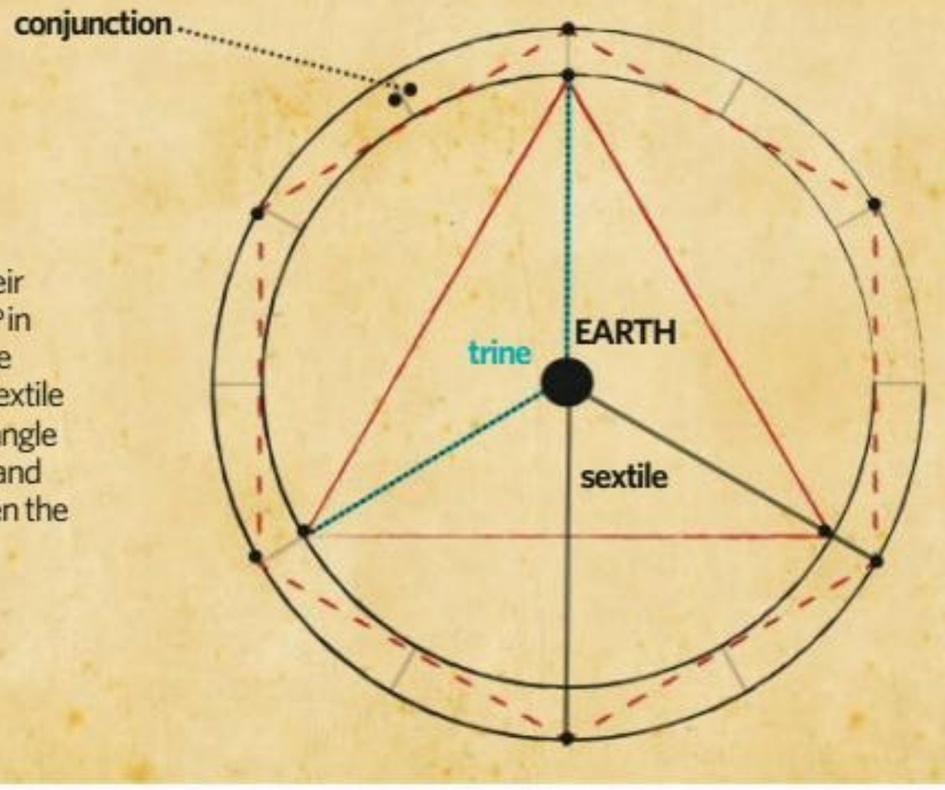
A.D. 16
Fearing subversive attempts to predict his death, the Roman emperor Tiberius expels astrologers from the imperial capital.

A.D. 147-160
Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy writes his treatise on astrology, *Tetrabiblos*, a work that will later influence Renaissance scholars.

A.D. 152-162
Greco-Roman scholar Vettius Valens publishes his *Anthology,* which includes a great number of horoscopes.

Unfavorable relationships
Two planets are in square when they form an angle of 90° in relation to Earth at the center. They are in opposition when they form an angle of 180°.





Favorable relationships
Two planets are in conjunction when their angular distance is 0° in relation to Earth at the center. They form a sextile when they are at an angle of 60° to each other and they form a trine when the angle is 120°.

Aspects of Fate

TO DISCERN an individual's destiny, ancient astrologers took three things into consideration: the meaning of each astral body in itself; its position in the system of zodiacal houses; and the influence of "aspects" that could favor friendship or animosity between bodies. This third term, "aspects," means the angles that bodies form with each other within the zodiacal circle, relative to Earth at the center. The body in question was not only present in a particular house of zodiacal sign (which was either favorable or unfavorable) but also had angular relationships with planets in other signs that either boded well or ill, depending on the value of that angle. Favorable angles included those called conjunction, trine, and sextile. Unfavorable angles were opposition or square.

A MODEL OF THE UNIVERSE

An armillary sphere created by Adam Heroldt in 1648 (below) is based on the model designed by Ptolemy, which placed the Earth at the center of the cosmos.

BRIDGEMAN/MCI

is open to fanciful interpretations and abuse: "As for the nonsense on which many waste their labor . . . this we shall dismiss in favor of the primary natural causes we shall investigate, not by means of lots and numbers of which no reasonable explanation can be given, but merely through the science of the aspects of the stars."

The *Tetrabiblos* exerted a huge influence over European scholars well into the Renaissance period. Ptolemy's insights, however, did not spring from a void, and owed much to scholarship developed 500 years before, in Mesopotamia.

Babylonian Influence

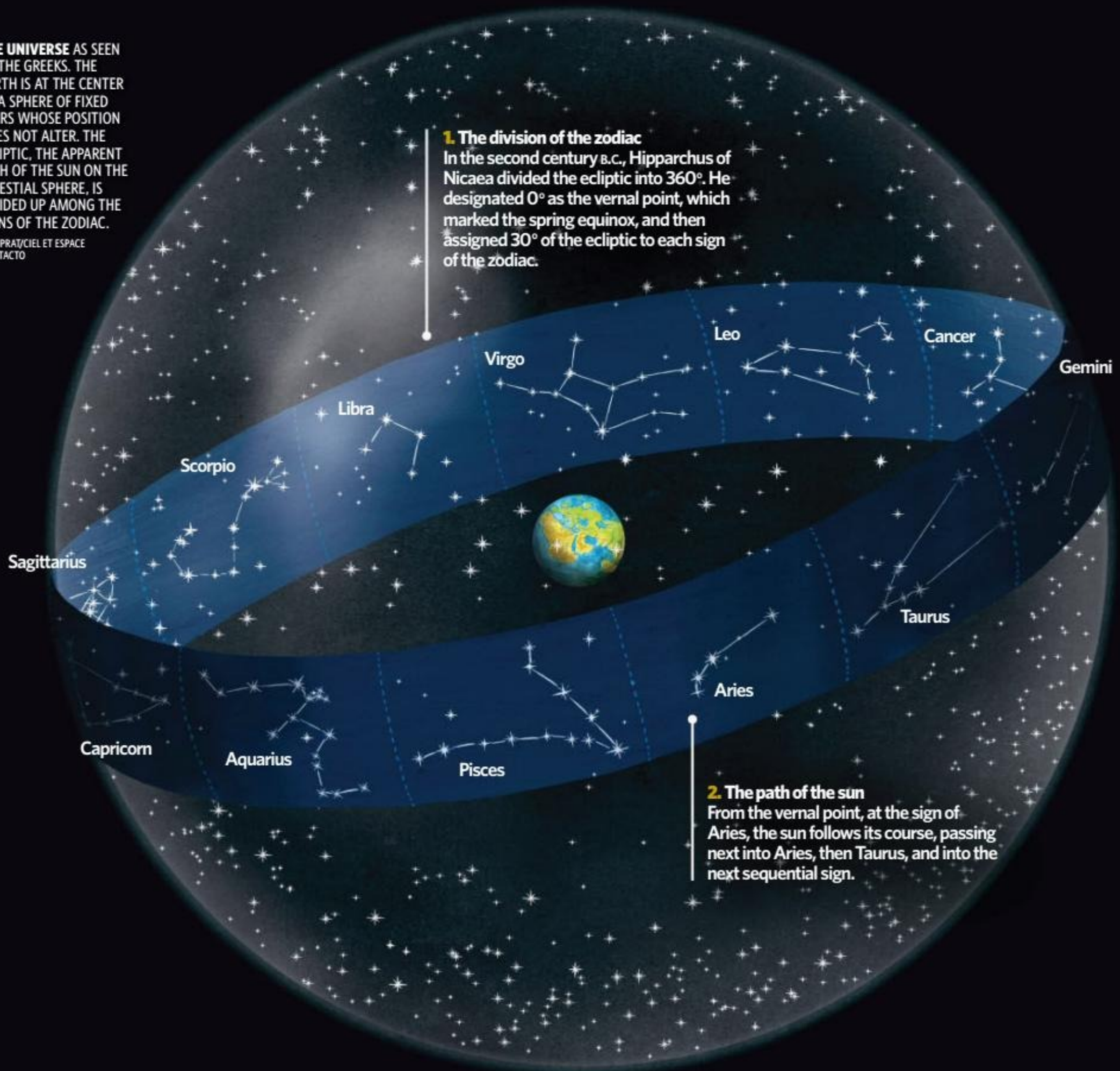
In the fifth century B.C., a scholar of ancient Babylonia, Nabu-rimanni, made a series of tables, known as ephemerides, which predicted the movement of the moon, the sun, and planets. This knowledge was developed as a tool to interpret national fortunes. Astral bodies, it was believed, influenced the growth of crops and governed human affairs. The Mesopotamian priests would interpret these celestial phenomena as relating to the fate of rulers or of a whole people. For example, an observation that "the Moon sets and Nabu [Mercury] is fixed in its place" was interpreted in the following way: "The king of Phoenicia falls and his enemy sacks the region."

Astrological practices were developed in the Greek tradition as an outgrowth of Babylon's influence. Following Alexander the Great's conquests in Mesopotamia in the fourth century B.C., Babylonian astrological ideas increasingly entered Greek thought. Around 290 B.C., a Babylonian scholar, Berossus, wrote a book blending Babylonian history and astrology popular with Greek thinkers. In parallel, the Greeks had made many advances in astronomy. Eudoxus, an astronomer of the fourth century B.C., had developed a geometric model of the sun, moon, and the five planets visible to the naked eye. A protégé of Plato, he proposed that the Earth is a fixed ball at the center of the cosmos.

Studying the heavens in this way spurred the development of astronomy, while pushing astrologers to attempt much more wide-reaching and varied astrological predictions than the Mesopotamians. In the century before Ptolemy, during the reign of Emperor Tiberius, the Roman poet Marcus Manilius produced his great verse exposition of astrology, known (confusingly) as the *Astronomica*. It reveals the extent to which

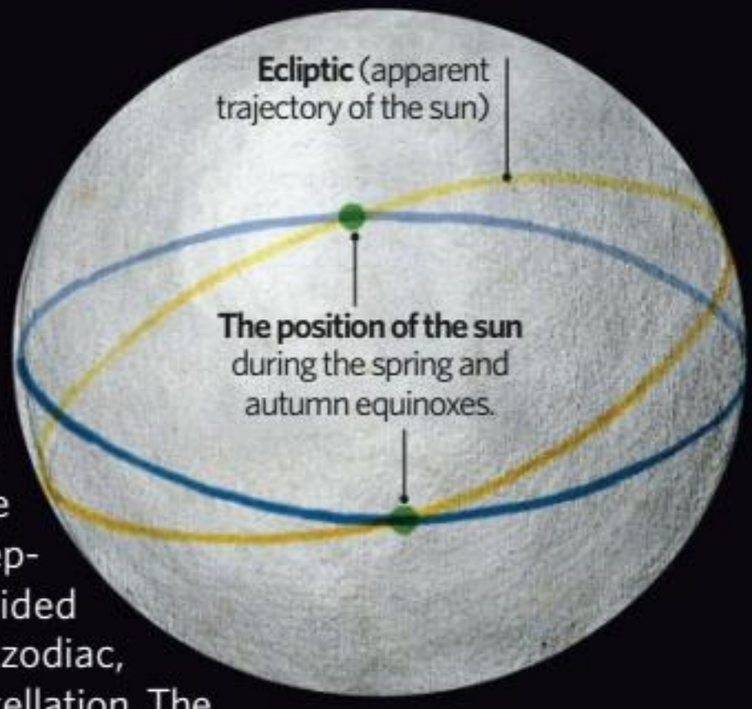
THE UNIVERSE AS SEEN BY THE GREEKS. THE EARTH IS AT THE CENTER OF A SPHERE OF FIXED STARS WHOSE POSITION DOES NOT ALTER. THE ECLIPTIC, THE APPARENT PATH OF THE SUN ON THE CELESTIAL SPHERE, IS DIVIDED UP AMONG THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC.

G. DUPRAT/CIEL ET ESPACE /CONTACTO


1. The division of the zodiac
In the second century B.C., Hipparchus of Nicaea divided the ecliptic into 360°. He designated 0° as the vernal point, which marked the spring equinox, and then assigned 30° of the ecliptic to each sign of the zodiac.
Leo
Cancer
Gemini
Virgo
Libra
Scorpio
Sagittarius
Capricorn
Aquarius
Pisces
Aries
Taurus
2. The path of the sun
From the vernal point, at the sign of Aries, the sun follows its course, passing next into Aries, then Taurus, and into the next sequential sign.

THE GREEK ZODIAC

THE GREEKS' CONCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSE was a series of spheres that revolved around the Earth, which was at the center. The outermost sphere held the stars, which were fixed in their positions. It was understood that the planets and the sun moved. Greek astronomers believed that the sun took a year to circle the Earth at an inclination of 23.44 degrees to the horizon. They called this apparent circle the ecliptic. Owing to this inclination, the sun crosses the Earth's Equator in two points during a year in events called equinoxes. The vernal equinox occurs in March, marking the beginning of spring. The autumnal equinox occurs in September. The ecliptic was divided up among the 12 signs of the zodiac, each corresponding to a constellation. The five visible planets were then observed to move within the ecliptic, creating a busy band across the sky, by which means the destiny of human lives could be tracked.



ON THE EQUINOXES, THE SUN CROSSES THE EARTH'S EQUATOR. AT THIS POINT, DAY AND NIGHT ARE OF EQUAL LENGTH.

G. DUPRAT/CIEL ET ESPACE/CONTACTO

PHANES, LORD OF THE ZODIAC

In Greek mythology, the god Phanes, born of Cronos, is the generator of life. He is depicted on this marble relief surrounded by zodiac signs. Third century A.D., Civic Museum, Modena

AKG/ALBUM

the sun, the moon, and the five known planets—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury—and the constellations were closely mapped in the Roman era. Each body's influence was determined by its inherent nature, its position in relation to other bodies, and its position relative to the zodiac—the belt of constellations across whose path the sun moved through the year, and across which the orbits of the moon and the known planets ran.

Each planet was believed to have its own features and personalities. They could enact mutual sympathy or antipathy, and, depending on their position in the zodiac, could be either in their own "house" or in hostile territory.

The "aspects," the angle formed between two planets relative to Earth, also had to be taken into account when creating a horoscope. The aspects were known as conjunction, 0°; sextile, 60°; square, 90°; trine, 120°; quartile, 150°; and opposition, 180°. Astral influences were particularly significant at certain moments in an individual's life, such as embarking on a journey or a new business venture. Most important of all, astral arrangements at the time of birth could influence the course of an entire life.

In Ptolemy's time, he drew on a rich tradition of ancient astronomical and astrological scholarship to bring heavenly insight to bear on the geopolitical complexities of the day. Ptolemy argued that a nationality's traits depend on which zodiac signs influenced the country. He wrote: "Britain . . . [and] Germany . . . are in closer familiarity with Aries and Mars. Therefore for the most part their inhabitants are fiercer, more headstrong and bestial. But Italy, Apulia . . . and Sicily have their familiarity with Leo and the sun; wherefore these peoples are more masterful, benevolent, and cooperative."

Astrology in Practice

In ancient Mesopotamia, horoscopes were created mainly for rulers. It is said that an astrologist once predicted that Alexander the Great would die in Babylon. The prophecy came true, and ever since, the art has had a seductive appeal to those in power. They have been intrigued as well as repelled by the practice.

In Rome, the emperor Augustus was depicted alongside Capricorn on cameo brooches, even though he was not born under this sign. One theory for Augustus' devotion to Capricorn may lie in its association with moral authority. His successor, Tiberius, however, fearing predictions of his own demise, had astrologers expelled from Rome in A.D. 16. Practitioners were often accused of charlatanry. "No astrologer lacking a criminal record possesses any talent," wrote the second-century Roman satirist Juvenal.

In the Greco-Roman world, horoscopes were available to the common people as well. Archaeologists have found many examples, such as a papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, written during the reign of Augustus:

> Year 27 of Caesar [Augustus] . . . Sun in Libra, moon in Pisces, Saturn in Taurus, Jupiter in Cancer, Mars in Virgo, [Venus in Scorpio], [Mercury in Virgo], [Scorpio is rising], [Leo is at Midheaven], [Taurus is then] setting. Lower Midheaven Aquarius. There are dangers. Take care for 40 days because of Mars.

The art of astrology both seduced and terrified rulers in the ancient world.

HEAD OF AUGUSTUS WITH HIS FAVORED ZODIACAL SIGN, CAPRICORN

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

HOROSCOPE PREPARED BY ITALIAN ASTROLOGER WILLIAM PARRON FOR HENRY VII OF ENGLAND. PARCHMENT CODEX, 1502-03, BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON

THE 12 ASTROLOGICAL HOUSES

THE SUN MOVES THROUGH the 12 signs of the zodiac in a year. Astrologers had another 12-part division at their disposal: the daily movement of the sun around the Earth, divided into 12 parts known as houses or temples. Each of these houses—known by their numbers, from 1 to 12—corresponded to three things: a sign of the zodiac; a period of two hours; and an area of human experience. This daily subdivison enabled astrologers to calculate detailed birth charts. The zodiac sign that appeared on the horizon at the moment of a person's birth is known specifically as the ascendant: The other points are the *occasus* (descendant), the *medium caelum* (middle of the sky), and the *imum caelum* (bottom of the sky). Once the *horoscopus,* or ascendant, had been determined, the circle of 12 houses came into play, each a different area of human activity. Depending on the configuration of the heavenly bodies at the exact moment of a person's birth, these could be interpreted as favorable or unfavorable.

THE AREAS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

I Life
II Wealth
III Siblings
IV Parents
V Children
VI Health
VII Marriage
VIII Death
IX Travel, Religion
X Occupation, Honors
XI Benefits, Friends
XII Losses, Enemies

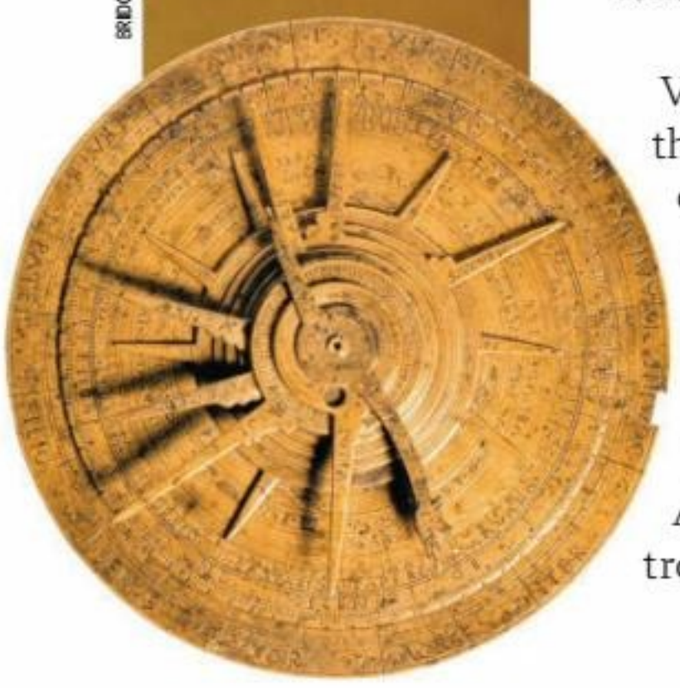
FRESCO BY RAPHAEL (1508), DEPICTING ASTRONOMY, IN THE STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA, VATICAN. THE CONFIGURATION OF THE SKY CORRESPONDS TO OCTOBER 31, 1503, THE DAY JULIUS II WAS ELECTED POPE.
SCALA, FLORENCE

Beware the Dog Star

DESPITE THE WIDESPREAD appeal of astrology, rulers in the Roman period often felt threatened by astrological predictions. On numerous occasions astrologers found themselves expelled from Rome—or worse. A particularly shocking story relates to Ascletarion, an astrologer who went around openly predicting the death of the first-century A.D. emperor Domitian. Suetonius wrote that the emperor called Ascletarion and challenged him to predict what his own end would be. The astrologer replied he would be eaten by dogs. "Domitian ordered him killed at once; but to prove the fallibility of his art, he ordered his funeral be attended to with great care. While this was being done, it chanced that the pyre was overset by a sudden storm and that dogs mangled the corpse."

ASTOUNDING ASTROLABE

This exquisitely crafted bronze astrolabe dates from the 15th century, and was used to fix the position of the sun and stars. In an age when astronomy and astrology were intertwined, it was used for making both precise, scientific calculations and horoscopes.



BRIDGEMAN/ACI

A collection of horoscopes from the Roman period was compiled by a Hellenist astrologer, Vettius Valens, who wrote around the same time as Ptolemy and traveled in Egypt. These horoscopes were cast based on past events, concerning people already dead. A rather damning one cast for April 1, A.D. 78, summarizes:

> This person was commanding and dictatorial because the rulers of the triangle [Leo, Sagittarius, Aries] were found to be at an angle and in the Ascendant . . . Mars, being unfavorably situated and not in aspect with the [III] Place had the opposite effects, both exile and violent death . . .

Valens also suggested that the position of the astral bodies caused serious illness, or even violent death: "The ruler [of Leo], the sun, was with Mars in Cancer, a wet sign." The conclusion: "This person drowned in the bath."

Future in the Stars

After the fall of Rome, the practice of astrology became so widespread that even the rise of Christianity could not stamp it out. During the European Renaissance, palaces, universities, and even the Vatican itself were decorated with astrological murals, reliefs, and paintings, and many of the best minds in science held on to astrological beliefs. Only in the early 1600s did attitudes begin to shift, when, turning the newly invented telescope skyward, Galileo made observations that vindicated Copernicus's earlier scientific theory that the Earth was not at the center of the universe.

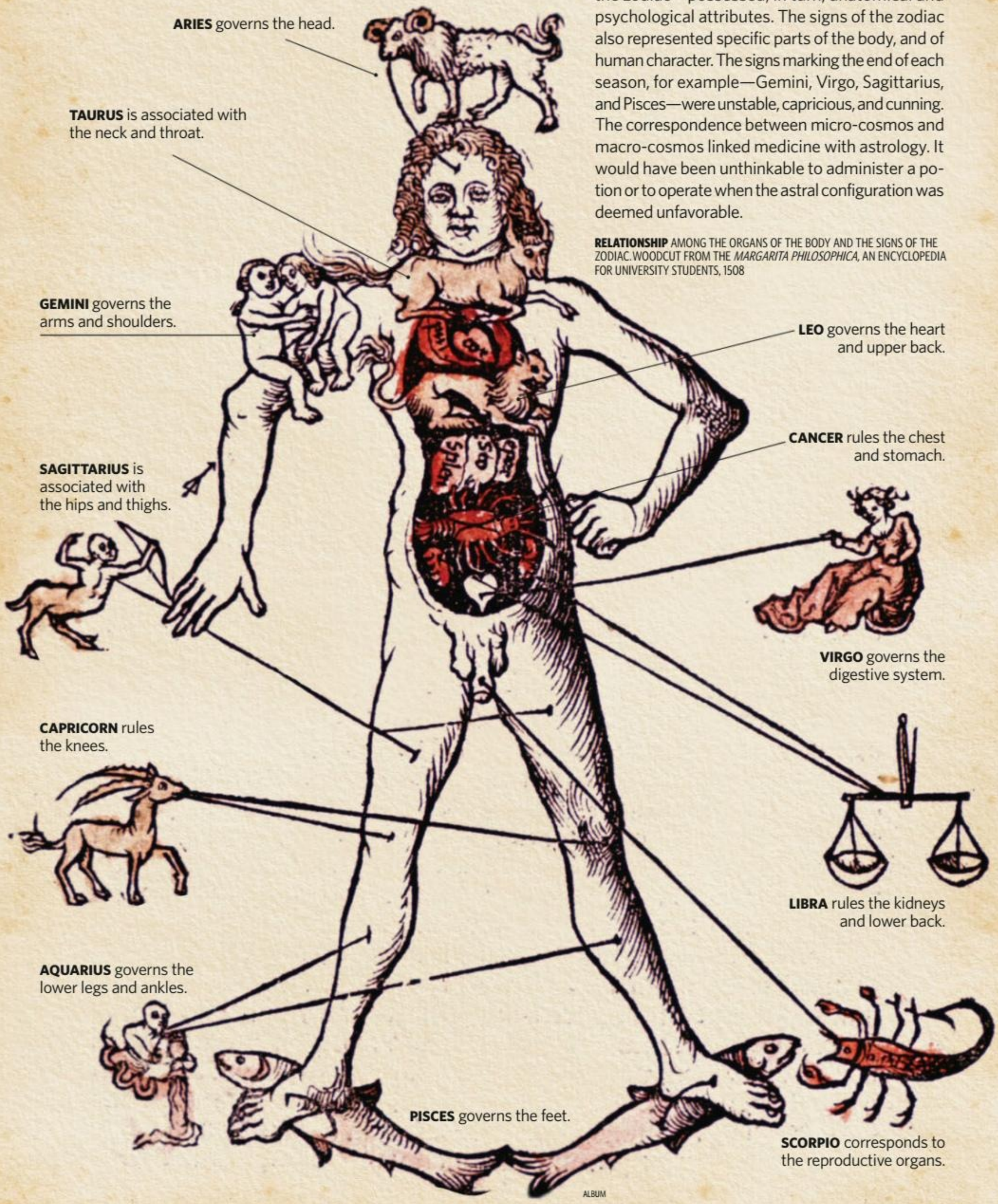
Even so, the death knell for astrology as a respected science was some time in coming, best demonstrated by the fact that Galileo was himself a practicing astrologer. Only when the scientific revolution culminated in the publication of Isaac Newton's great work *Principia* in 1687 did astronomy finally supplant astrology as a science. A new world dawned, one in which humans would come to rely on reason and logic, and leave superstition behind. From this moment, they would understand not the intimate involvement of the planets in human affairs—but rather their indifference. ■

A SPECIALIST IN CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY, PALOMA ORTIZ GARCÍA HAS PUBLISHED WIDELY ON ARISTOTLE AND OTHER FIGURES IN GREEK THOUGHT AND CULTURE.

THE HEAVENLY BODY

THE GREEKS IMAGINED the body as a micro-cosmos, a miniature replica of the vast cosmos itself, whose elements—planets, constellations, the zodiac—possessed, in turn, anatomical and psychological attributes. The signs of the zodiac also represented specific parts of the body, and of human character. The signs marking the end of each season, for example—Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces—were unstable, capricious, and cunning. The correspondence between micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos linked medicine with astrology. It would have been unthinkable to administer a potion or to operate when the astral configuration was deemed unfavorable.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE ORGANS OF THE BODY AND THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC. WOODCUT FROM THE *MARGARITA PHILOSOPHICA*, AN ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, 1508



ARIES governs the head.

TAURUS is associated with the neck and throat.

GEMINI governs the arms and shoulders.

LEO governs the heart and upper back.

CANCER rules the chest and stomach.

SAGITTARIUS is associated with the hips and thighs.

VIRGO governs the digestive system.

CAPRICORN rules the knees.

LIBRA rules the kidneys and lower back.

AQUARIUS governs the lower legs and ankles.

PISCES governs the feet.

SCORPIO corresponds to the reproductive organs.

ALBUM

FROM THE ANCIENTS TO THE

Astrological art flourished at the Vatican and in Rome during the 16th century, culminating in this celestial ceiling in the Sala Bologna, commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII. In line with Renaissance thought, pagan motifs were not at odds with Christianity, but were used to proclaim the glory of God's creation.

① *Aries*

Mythological symbol: The Ram whose hide became the Golden Fleece
Bright star: Alpha Areitis
Period: March 21 to April 20
Ruling planet: Mars
Element: Fire

② *Taurus*

Mythological symbol: The Bull, father of the Minotaur whom Theseus killed
Bright star: Alpha Tauri
Period: April 21 to May 20
Ruling planet: Venus
Element: Earth

③ *Gemini*

Mythological symbol: The Twins, Castor and Pollux, children of Leda and Zeus
Bright stars: Castor and Pollux
Period: May 21 to June 20
Ruling planet: Mercury
Element: Air

④ *Cancer*

Mythological symbol: The Crab that Hercules crushed in his battle with the Hydra
Bright star: Beta Cancri
Period: June 21 to July 20
Ruling body: The moon
Element: Water

⑤ *Leo*

Mythological symbol: The Nemean Lion, squeezed to death by Hercules
Bright objects: Leonid showers
Period: July 21 to Aug. 20
Ruling body: The sun
Element: Fire

⑥ *Virgo*

Mythological symbol: The Virgin, Astraea, the last immortal to live with humans
Bright star: Beta Virginis
Period: Aug. 21 to Sept. 20
Ruling planet: Mercury
Element: Earth

RENAISSANCE

CEILING OF THE SALA BOLOGNA
GIOVANNI ANTONIO VANOSINO DA VARESE, 1575, VATICAN, VATICAN CITY

⑫ *Pisces*
Mythological symbol: The Fish, who brought about the birth of Aphrodite
Bright star: Beta Piscium
Period: Feb. 21 to March 20
Ruling planet: Jupiter
Element: Water

⑪ *Aquarius*
Mythological symbol: The Water Bearer, Ganymede, who served the gods on Olympus
Notable star: 91 Aquarii
Period: Jan. 21 to Feb. 20
Ruling planet: Saturn
Element: Air

⑩ *Capricorn*
Mythological symbol: The Goat, based on the Mesopotamian god Enki
Bright star: Delta Capricorni
Period: Dec. 21 to Jan. 20
Ruling planet: Saturn
Element: Earth

⑦ *Libra*
Mythological symbol: The Scales, borne by Themis, goddess of law
Bright star: Alpha Librae
Period: Sept. 21 to Oct. 20
Ruling planet: Venus
Element: Air

⑧ *Scorpio*
Mythological symbol: The Scorpion, sent to kill the huntsman Orion
Bright star: Alpha Scorpii
Period: Oct. 21 to Nov. 20
Ruling planet: Mars
Element: Water

⑨ *Sagittarius*
Mythological symbol: The Archer, a wise centaur who taught the warrior Achilles
Bright star: Alpha Sagittarii
Period: Nov. 21 to Dec. 20
Ruling planet: Jupiter
Element: Fire

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

CASCADING WEALTH

Jaipur's Huwa Mahal, "Palace of Winds," was built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. Jaipur was a Rajput principality that was governed by the Kachwaha clan, under an arrangement with the British imperial authorities.

VITTORIO SCIOSIA/FOTOTECA 9X12

ALL THAT GLITTERS

INDIA'S MAHARAJAS

From the 1500s, as Europeans sought a foothold in India, its princes became pawns in a battle for imperial control. Under the British, the maharajas built dreamlike palaces: compensation for turning over their political power.

JORDI CANAL-SOLER

THE TIGER FOUNDS A DYNASTY

ZAHIR-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD, better known as Babur, or "Tiger" in Arabic, was a descendant of two conquering lineages: that of the Mongol Genghis Khan, and also that of Timu—or Tamerlane—the fearsome Turkic who had ravaged India, Persia, and the Near East in the 14th century. After having failed to gain control of Samarqand, Babur turned his sights to the south. With an initial campaign in Punjab in 1519, Babur and his men fought and defeated superior armies until they had secured land from Kandahar (present-day Afghanistan) to the borders of Bengal in the east, and to the Rajput desert in the south. Unlike his Turkic ancestors, he wasn't satisfied with simple raids into India. He convinced his men to establish themselves in the subcontinent, founding the Mughal empire.

MEMOIRS OF A TIGER

Babur was not only a great military leader, he was also an author. He left for posterity the *Baburnama (Book of Babur),* his vivid memoirs, in which he covers geography, society, and warfare.

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

Today, India is a modern, unified nation, proud to have been the world's largest democracy for the past 70 years. But in its long journey from a cradle of world religions, through its survival of the British Empire, then to independence and beyond, it has always been a country of infinite variety with many social castes, ethnicities, languages, and religions under the rule of a dizzying array of princes.

Known as the maharajas—meaning "great rulers" in Sanskrit—India's princes saw their power shrink as European nations asserted a colonial presence in Asia. Even so, it suited both the princes themselves, and the new imperial powers, to retain the appearance of power. This outward pomp of the maharajas form an intriguing, and revealing, backdrop to the imperial battle to control the great subcontinent.

The Portuguese were the first imperialists there, conquering and establishing a commercial enclave in Goa, on India's western coast, as early as 1510. The Dutch, the French, and the English soon followed. Their expeditions were aimed at securing small domains from which they could engage in trading cotton, silk, indigo (a blue dye made from plants), and saltpeter, a chemical compound used to manufacture gunpowder.

BRITAIN'S COLONIAL RULE

1600 — The **East India Company** is created to set up trade colonies in India.

1757 — **After victory** over Nawab Siraj al-Dawlah at the Battle of Plassey, the British control Bengal and begin expanding across India.

TIGER ATTACKING A BRITISH SOLDIER. 1790, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

The relatively small size of the early European settlements was due to both opportunity and necessity. Most of India had already been invaded in the early 16th century by Mughal forces led by a great military leader known as Babur.

Originating from present-day Uzbekistan, Babur was a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, the notorious Mongol warrior. His heirs were still in a strong position when Europeans started to make their presence felt in the Indian subcontinent. Even though the Mughal were Muslims, they were generally respectful of religious diversity. The emperor Akbar, who ruled from 1556 to 1605, made great efforts to give Hindus equal rights within the military and civil organization of the state. Despite this attempt to consolidate a unified state, the factionalism that had bedeviled India before the arrival of the Mughal would come creeping back as the Mughal's grip on India weakened.

The British Invasion

Having progressively managed to rid themselves of Dutch and French competition, the British made the most of the Mughal weakness and the animosity between neighboring states. The British presence was initially a private one, under the auspices of the East

THE WALLS OF GWALIOR FORT

This imposing 15th-century palatial fort (above), protecting many temples and palaces, belonged to the Scindia, a dynasty who ruled in Gwalior until the 1940s.

AMAR GROVER/AWL IMAGES

MEDAL BEARING A PORTRAIT OF THE MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH. VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

VANDA IMAGES/PHOTOAISA

1857

The **Sepoy Rebellion,** or Indian Mutiny, breaks out in northern and central India. The revolt is brutally crushed. In 1858, Great Britain proclaims the British Raj.

1877

Queen Victoria is declared Empress of India in Delhi, where a *durbar* is held, an assembly presided by the viceroy and attended by most of the maharajas.

1947

The **independence** of India and Pakistan ends the maharajas' ruling rights but not their titles or property.

PILLARS OF POWER

The pavilion inside the majestic palace fort of Amer, near Jaipur, is decorated with lotus-shaped columns and stands above a lake and gardens. The current palace was built in 1592 by Man Singh, commander of the Mughal army.

JAN WLODARCZYK/AGE FOTOSTOCK

ILLUSTRATED LONDON/AGE FOTOSTOCK

CURZON'S CULTURE CLASH

IN 1899, LORD CURZON, recently appointed Viceroy of India, was not impressed with some of the maharajas. He wrote to Queen Victoria (Empress of India since 1877) to inform her of what he regarded as the indecorous behavior of the worst "offenders." Curzon called them "frivolous and sometimes vicious spendthrifts and idlers" and listed off the vices of each one of them. The rana of Dholpur was "fast sinking into an inebriate and a sot," the maharaja of Bharatpur shot a servant, and Maharaja Holkar of Indore was half-mad and "addicted to horrible vices." As for the raja of Kapurthala, he was a "third-class chief of fifth-rate character," who loved chasing women and gambling in Paris, while the nizam of Hyderabad was obsessed with his harem (he had 7 wives and 42 concubines). Curzon would serve eight years as viceroy before political strife forced him to resign from office in 1905 and return to England.

LORD CURZON, ACCOMPANIED BY THE MAHARAJA OF REWA AND CAPTAIN WIGRAM, POSING IN THE JUNGLE DURING A TIGER HUNT IN 1903

India Company. As the company started to gain more territory, the government's involvement increased. The British sought allies by promising the different princes security provided by the company's private armies.

The existing animosity among the Indian rulers made it easy for the British to use alliances to pit the princes against one another. Bribes were also often used to incite dissent: Before the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company paid off officers of the army of the prince of Bengal. Their victory in this battle consolidated the Ccmpany's presence in the subcontinent.

Over the next century, the company steadily grew. Following the Indian Mutiny of 1857, however, the British government stripped the company of political control and established the British Raj—direct, imperial rule over the subcontinent, a move that completed Britain's colonization of India. But incorporation within the empire did not mean that the country had become homogenized: Under the new colonial government, no fewer than 565 princely states

FLOATING PALACE
It is not known when the stunning Jal Mahal, the "Water Palace," was built in the middle of Man Sagar Lake in Jaipur. The palace was restored and extended by Maharaja Jai Singh II in the 18th century as a recreational pavilion.
PAUL PANAYIOTOU/FOTOTECA 9X12

with considerable autonomy still coexisted alongside territory run directly by the English viceroy and his civil servants. These states were divided into three categories. At the top were 118 salute states. Their rulers, who took the title of maharaja, raja, or nawab, were entitled to be greeted with up to 21 cannon shots upon arrival at the capital, Delhi. In the middle were 117 non-salute states, which had limited jurisdiction. The rest were powerless states run by taluqdars, thakurs, and jagirdars, hereditary landowners without civil jurisdiction.

Pawns and Profligacy

The maharajas had full jurisdiction within their states—though that did not mean they were fully independent; the British controlled the army and foreign policy. Having stripped the maharajas of real autonomy, the British Raj secured sources of income for the loyal ones by bestowing titles and honors. Having been relieved of the *raja-praja,* the sacred bond to protect their people, the maharajas devoted their time to other pursuits. They were encouraged to become Anglicized. A university for princes was built: Rajkumar College in Rajkot, where many received an elite education.

The arrival of Pax Britannica in India meant that the maharajas no longer needed to fight among themselves. Many decided to leave their drafty rural fortresses and move into luxurious, modern palaces built by British architects. As the maharajas' power waned, Indian-born writer Rudyard Kipling wrote, all they had left was "to offer mankind a spectacle." When Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the maharaja of Baroda, had Laxmi Vilas Palace built, it was the largest privately constructed building in the world at the time. He had a private train and a polo field. He wrote in his memoirs that it took him two years to fully get to know his vast estate.

Ram Singh, the maharaja of Bundi, built and embellished Bundi Palace in Rajasthan, which Kipling described as "such a palace as men build for themselves in uneasy dreams—the

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

In 1849, the British confiscated the famous Koh-i-noor diamond from the maharaja of Punjab. In 1937, the stone was mounted in a crown (below) worn by the mother of Queen Elizabeth II.

GRANGER/ALBUM

MAHARAJAS' SPARKLING TREASURE

During the Raj, the maharajas felt the need to show off their status through ostentation. One of their preferred forms of flaunting their wealth was by wearing an abundance of jewels at public events. This taste for precious stones was an inheritance from the Mughal period, when craftsmanship of extraordinary refinement had been achieved. The items shown on this page mostly come from Jaipur, in the state of Rajasthan, in the north of India.

Turban ornaments
Inspired by the Mughal custom of decorating turbans with heron feathers, smiths designed these jewels called *jighas*. This set is made up of diamonds, rubies, a sapphire, an emerald, and a large pearl. 18th century, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

VANDA IMAGES/PHOTOAISA

Necklace
The maharajas finished off their attire with necklaces such as this one, made of gold and set with rubies and pearls. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

MAHARAJA SAWAI PRATAP SINGH OF JAIPUR, FESTOONED WITH A MULTICOLORED TURBAN, NECKLACES, AND PEARLS

GRANGER/ALBUM

Bracelet
The item shown above is made of gold, enameled inside, and set with agates, amber, opals and pearls on the outside. 19th century, Private collection

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Adornment

Made of gold and rubies, and decorated with an enamel peacock, this item adorned a turban. From Jaipur, 19th century. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Choker

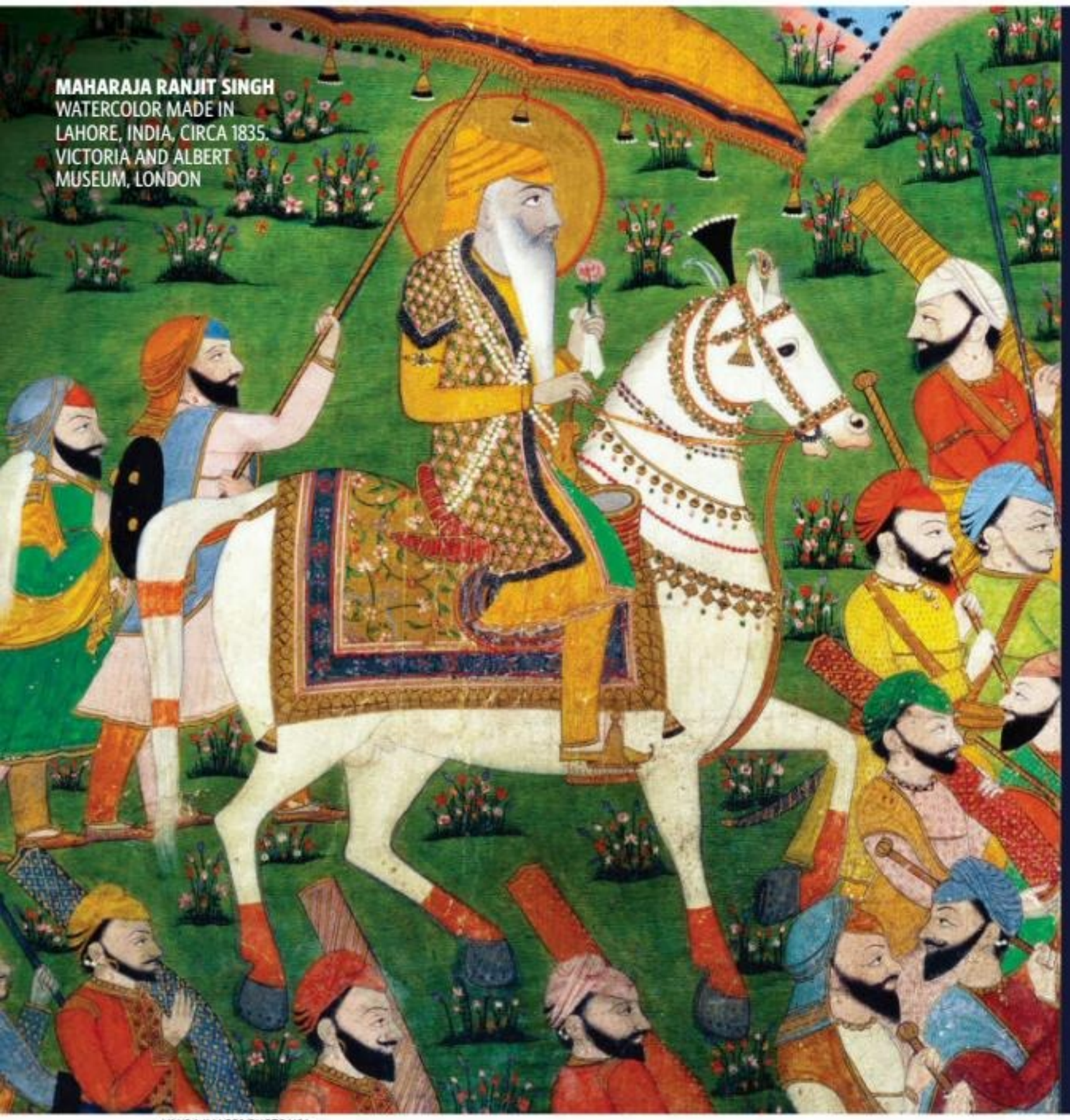
There are 30 diamonds and pearls in this magnificent necklace, which is completed with a large teardrop emerald. 19th-20th centuries, British Museum, London

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

Belt Buckle

The maharajas' belt buckles were set with a wide array of colorful jewels like this one, made of gold and precious and semiprecious stones. Guimet Museum, Paris

THIERRY OLLIVIER/RMN-GRAND PALAIS



MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH WATERCOLOR MADE IN LAHORE, INDIA, CIRCA 1835. VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

VANDA IMAGES/PHOTOAISA

THE LION OF THE SIKH STATE

EVEN THOUGH he came to be known as the Lion of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh's appearance did not seem fearsome: He was of poor build with a pockmarked face and blind in one eye. But he made up for his physical shortcomings with his leadership skills. Ranjit Singh managed to establish a state for his fellow Sikhs in the early 19th century, in a series of territories that included parts of modern Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. He signed treaties with the British, and even though he had tried to integrate Hindus and Muslims in his territories and his army, his conquests and achievements barely outlasted him. After his death in 1839, the Sikh state only lasted a few years before internecine feuds led to its collapse.

work of goblins more than the work of men. It is built into and out of a hillside, in gigantic terrace on terrace, and dominates the whole of the city."

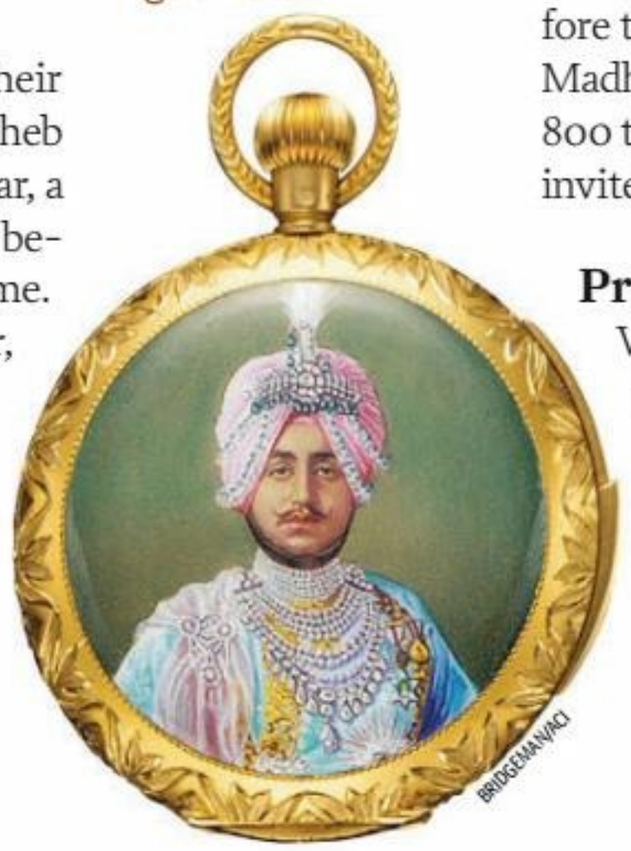
At the center of all these palaces was the *durbar,* a hall where the maharaja received his courtiers and petitions from his subjects. It was also where he received the *nazar,* a tax normally paid in silver coins during ostentatious public ceremonies. At these formal events the maharajas would wear awe-inspiring jewelry of emeralds, rubies, diamonds, pearls, gold, and silver.

Some maharajas devoted their lives to their passion for sport. One example was Jam Saheb Shri Ranjitsinhji, the maharaja of Nawanagar, a great cricketer, who played for England, and became one of the greatest batsmen of all time. Sawai Man Singh II, the maharaja of Jaipur, was a champion polo player. His team became world champions at the Deauville Gold Cup (France).

Other maharajas were noted for their eccentricities. When Madho Singh II, the maharaja of Jaipur, traveled to London for Queen Victoria's jubilee, he took water from the Ganges for his private use in two vast silver urns weighing more than 500 pounds each—known to be the largest silver objects in the world. Jaipur was famed for its tradition of training leopards to help princes and other nobles hunt deer. Brijendra Singh, the maharaja of Bharatpur, had a fleet of Rolls-Royces from which he shot ducks on hunting trips. Maharaja Jai Singh of Alwar used women as bait for tigers (but always shot the animals before they could attack). It is said that Maharaja Madhavrao Scindia of Gwalior killed more than 800 tigers on his land during hunts to which he invited senior members of the British Raj.

GOLD AND JEWELS

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was the owner of an exclusive jewel, the Patiala Necklace, created by Cartier in 1928. Below, a portrait of the maharaja on a gold watch.



BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Progressive Princes

While some maharajas devoted their lives to the pursuit of pleasure, others poured their efforts into improving conditions on their lands and cultivating personal relationships with influential British civil servants. The outstanding example was Maharaja Ram Singh II of Jaipur, a progressive

governor who abolished slavery, female infanticide, and the ancient custom of *sati* (the immolation of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres). He also built new roads, introduced gas lights, and installed running water systems.

Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the maharaja of Baroda, is considered one of the greatest statesmen India has produced. He introduced free education for girls in his state, banned child marriage, and introduced electricity and railroads. Even so, he was not without his quirks. One of his eccentricities was the Tuladan ritual, in which he sat on scales and had his own weight counted out in gold, which he then distributed among his subjects.

With the rise of Indian nationalism in the 1920s, the princes started to feel the pressure to evolve. They were forced to modernize and introduce democracy, and also saw themselves forced into choosing between one or the other of two stark choices: remain loyal to the British or align themselves with the parties calling for independence.

Most were hostile to the independence movement, which they saw as a threat to their privileges. In 1947, when the British left India, the princely states were invited to join one of the two countries that were created from the British Raj: India or Pakistan. Some held out against either, such as Mir Osman Ali Khan, one of the richest men in the world, and nizam of the state of Hyderabad. The new Indian government had to send a division with tank support to get the rebel state to agree to become part of India.

Independence removed the princes' ruling rights but not their titles, wealth, or privileges. In 1971, when the government stopped paying subsidies, the maharajas had to reinvent themselves. Many of them handed over their costly palaces to the state. The maharaja of Jaipur, for example, turned his palace into a luxury hotel. Others invested their fortunes in commercial interests, and their descendants are now key business figures of the modern India. ■

TRAVEL WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND HISTORIAN, JORDI CANAL-SOLER HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY ON INDIA AND ASIA.

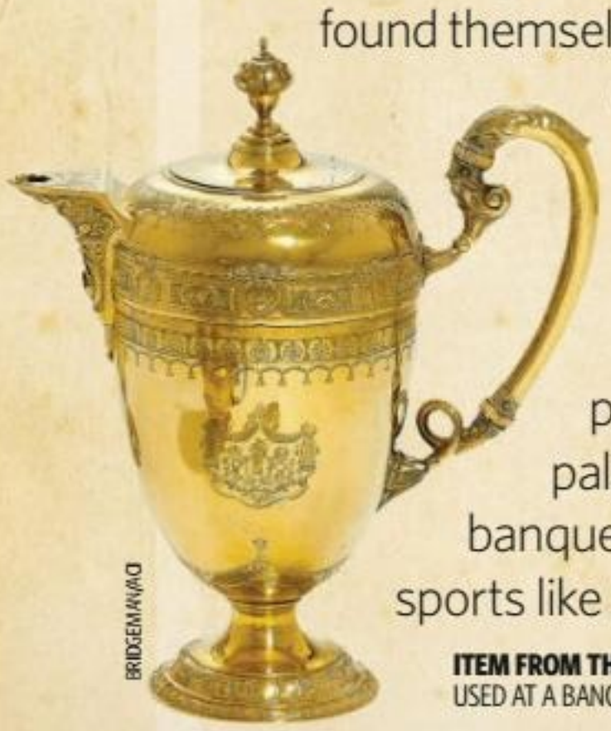
VIBRANT FRESCOES

The richly decorated Chitrashala pavilion at the Bundi Palace (above) stands on a hill overlooking the city of Bundi in northwest India. It was built in the 17th century by Ratan Ji Heruled.

PHILIPPE MICHEL/AGE FOTOSTOCK

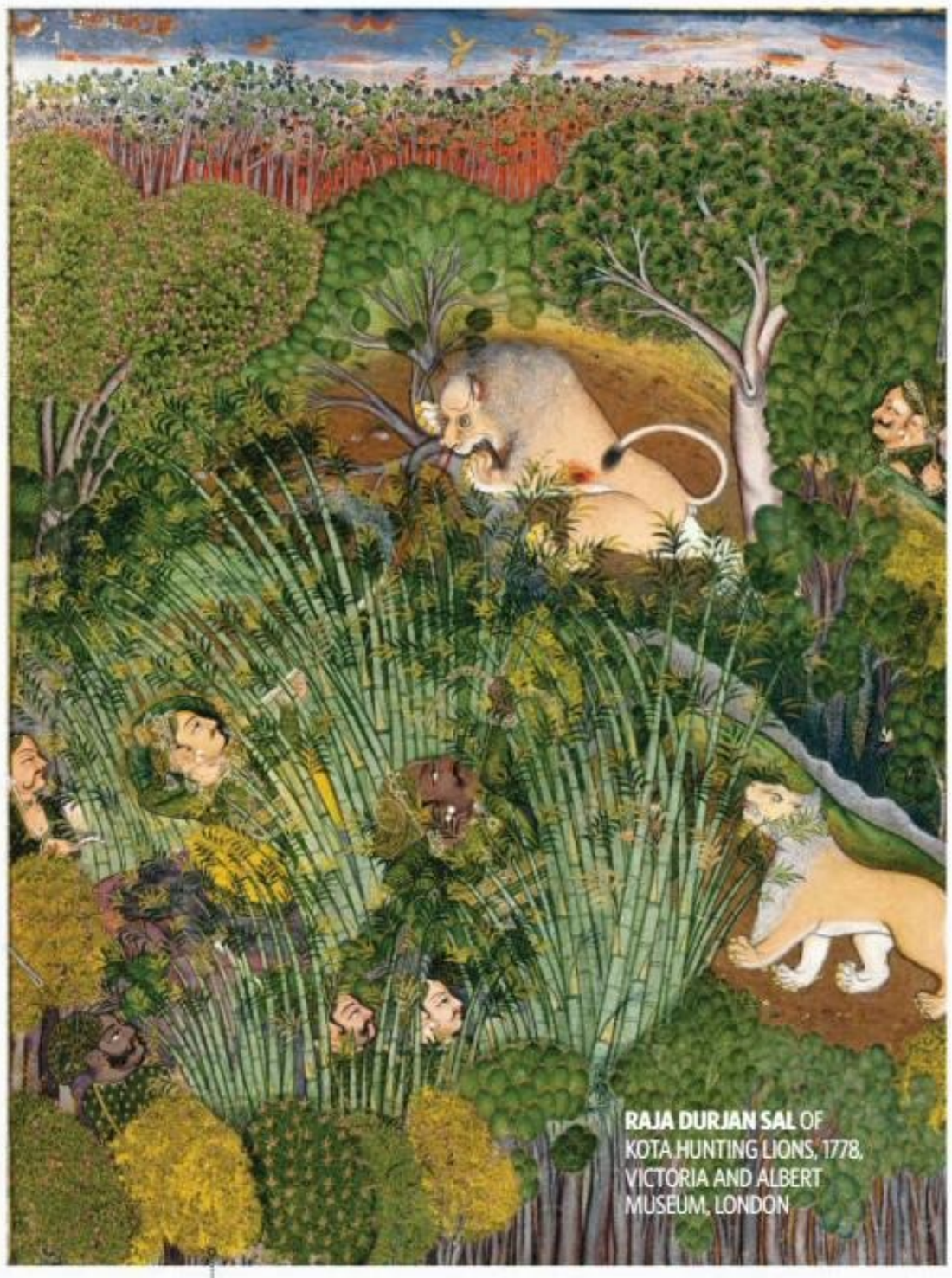
MAHARAJAS' LIVES OF LEISURE

After the British arrived and stripped them of their true governing power, the maharajas found themselves with lots more time for enjoyment. While they did play a role in elaborate political ceremonies, many gave themselves over to the pursuit of pleasure, such as building palaces, hunting, hosting banquets, and playing elite British sports like polo and cricket.



BRIDGEMAN/AKG

ITEM FROM THE DINNER SERVICE OF THE MAHARAJA OF PATIALA USED AT A BANQUET IN HONOR OF THE PRINCE OF WALES IN 1922



RAJA DURJAN SAL OF KOTA HUNTING LIONS, 1778, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

VANDA IMAGES/PHOTOAISA

Green gardens

The maharajas and their wives whiled away the time in their luxuriant gardens, where peacocks strutted around fountains and lakes. Their needs were met by an army of discreet servants.

Thrilling hunts

One of the maharajas' favorite pastimes was hunting wild animals such as lions, tigers, and elephants. This constant, indiscriminate slaughter almost led to the extinction of species like the Bengal tiger.

Sumptuous palaces

Many maharajas lived in lavish estates. Amer Fort (below) was the palatial fortress built for the Rajput maharajas. In the 19th century, the maharaja of Kapurthala modeled his palace after Versailles.

AKG/ALBUM

◀ **A MAHARAJA** AND HIS WIFE OR CONCUBINE IN THE GARDEN, MINIATURE, CIRCA 1750, MUSEUM OF JODHPUR, INDIA

Mysore — Seat of maharaja power
Madras — British administrative capital
Daman — Portuguese colony
Yanam — French colony
Area of direct British rule from 1858
Princely states under British protection, from 1858
(Present-day names in parentheses)

MAP: EOSGIS.COM

HIMALAYA

Jammu
Lahore
Bahawalpur
Indus
Khairpur
Delhi
Bikaner
Jaipur
Jodhpur
Gwalior
Ganges
Brahmaputra
Hyderabad
Imphal
Bhopal
Chandernagore (Chandannagar)
Calcutta (Kolkata)
Baroda (Vadodara)
Diu
Daman
Nagpur
Bombay (Mumbai)
INDIA
Jeypore
BAY OF BENGAL
ARABIAN SEA
Hyderabad
Yanaon (Yanam)
Goa
Madras (Chennai)
Pondicherry (Puducherry)
Mahé
Mysore (Mysuru)
Karikal (Karaikal)
Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram)
CEYLON (SRI LANKA)
Colombo

AKG/ALBUM

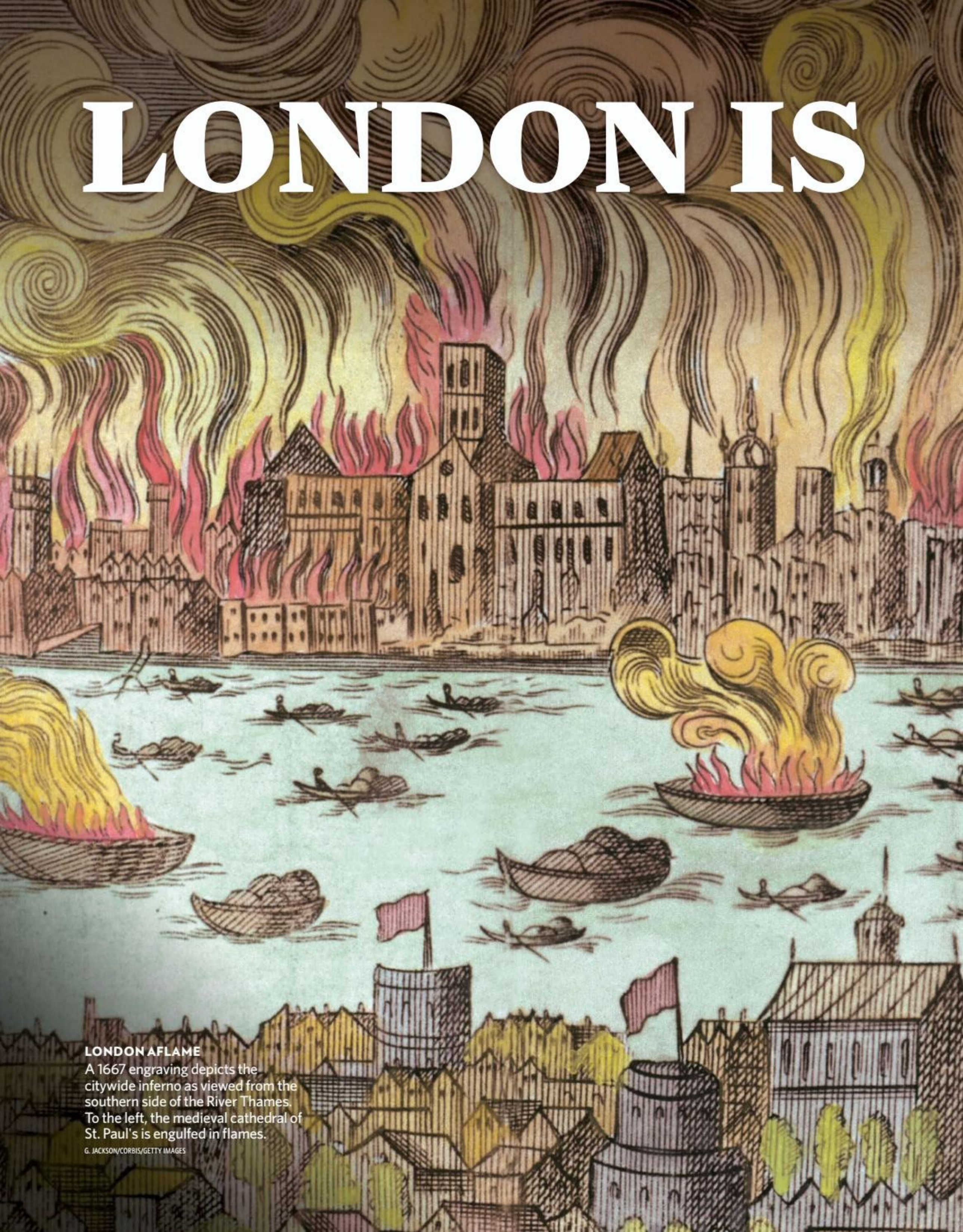
Royal sports

Polo, a sport played on horseback, had been popular among the Indian maharajas since the times of the Mughal empire. During the British Raj, many maharajas promoted this sport and even owned teams.

POLO MATCH BETWEEN INDIAN PRINCES, 19TH-CENTURY MINIATURE

▲ **AMER FORT,** PAINTING BY WILLIAM "CRIMEA" SIMPSON, 1863, BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

LONDON IS



LONDON AFLAME
A 1667 engraving depicts the citywide inferno as viewed from the southern side of the River Thames. To the left, the medieval cathedral of St. Paul's is engulfed in flames.

G. JACKSON/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

BURNING

In 1666, a conflagration swept through London, devouring the city center in its wake. In the inferno's aftermath, the English capital rebuilt itself as a modern city for a new international age.

VICTOR LLORET BLACKBURN

The Great Fire of London had humble origins, starting in a bakery on September 2, 1666. Raging out of control for four days, the fire was the worst in England's history. It destroyed the core of the medieval city and left one-sixth of its citizens homeless. While the official death toll tallied in at only six, modern historians view this low figure with some skepticism. Loss of life among the poor was likely to remain undocumented, and archaeological evidence suggests that searing temperatures may have reached as high as 3000°F, which could reduce human remains to ash.

The staggering material damage was easier to account: In addition to St. Paul's Cathedral and civic buildings such as the Royal Exchange, 87 parish churches and more than 13,000 houses were lost. London diarist John Evelyn described clambering "over mountaines [*sic*] of yet smoking rubbish." Others reported that the destruction was so complete they could barely tell where they were, navigating by the ruins of once magnificent churches. Many Londoners were financially ruined—yet the task of reconstruction would enable the city to rise again and reinvent itself, paving the way for its later international role as the hub of the British Empire.

From Everyday to Inferno

The inquiry that followed the fire placed its origin in a bakery on Pudding Lane, near London Bridge. The baker Thomas Farynor insisted that he had ensured his oven had been properly extinguished. But in the small hours of Sunday, September 2, 1666, he awoke to find his house in flames.

In densely populated, timber-built cities such as 17th-century London, fires were a constant yet familiar menace. As dawn broke that day, the rapid spread of the flames from Farynor's house to the surrounding streets was greeted with reactions ranging from minor concern to absolute indifference. On being woken with the news, the mayor himself, Sir Thomas Bloodworth, rather crudely, responded: "Why, a woman could piss it out!"

This fire, however, would be different from any other London had seen. Following a summer of low rainfall, the city was a veritable tinderbox. Fanned by a strong east wind, the bakery fire rapidly turned from a local neighborhood event to a city-wide inferno. Later that day, London Bridge, crammed with houses and shops, was ablaze.

Historians of the Great Fire have been gifted with an engaging witness of the event: Samuel Pepys, whose great diary details the drama the fire set in motion. Roaming the streets that Sunday morning, and sensing the rising tide of panic, Pepys recorded "poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats."

Pepys's role in the Great Fire, however, was not limited to being a mere chronicler. Having risen through the ranks of the English navy as an administrator, he had influence with no less than King Charles II. Appalled by the inaction of Mayor Bloodworth, and "having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it," Pepys set off to report to the king in person. The king instructed Pepys to force the mayor to start pulling down houses in order to create a fire break.

"At last met my Lord Mayor," Pepys recounts. "To the King's message, he cried, like a fainting woman: 'Lord! What can I do? I am spent. People will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it.'"

Eventually, the king himself intervened to direct the creation of firebreaks. But the fire raged on unchecked through Monday, September 3. "The burning still rages," the diarist John Evelyn noted on Tuesday, September 4, 1666. The fire that, street by street, had been consuming the capital for two

1666
THE GREAT Fire destroys much of the medieval center of London. King Charles II studies Christopher Wren's plans to rebuild the city.

1676
A DECADE after the fire, most houses have been rebuilt. In the following years, 51 parish churches will be rebuilt according to Wren's designs.

1707
LONDON is the capital of the newly formed United Kingdom of Great Britain. Four years later, Wren's new St. Paul's Cathedral is inaugurated.

1736
STREET lighting is funded by taxation. Goods flood in as Britain's commercial might grows, but infant mortality rates start to soar.

1800
THE INDUSTRIAL revolution is in full swing. The City hits one million people, and in just over a decade will be the biggest city in the world.

COIN DEPICTING CHARLES II, WHO LED REBUILDING EFFORTS AFTER THE FIRE
ART ARCHIVE

days, "[has] now gotten as far as the Inner Temple, Fleet Streete, and the Old Bailey . . . The Stones of St. Paules [*sic*] flew like Grenades, the Lead melting down the streets in a stream, & the very pavements . . . glowing with a fiery rednesse [*sic*], so as nor horse nor man was able to tread on them."

Witnesses reported seeing the pall of smoke from Oxford, about 60 miles away. On Tuesday, the day on which Evelyn reported St. Paul's Cathedral in flames, and at the very moment when the fire seemed unstoppable, the wind suddenly changed direction. The firestorm was now blown back on itself and started to slacken. Gangs of workers scrambled through Wednesday to clear housing and widen the firebreaks, and by Thursday, September 6, the fire was mostly out.

Ruin and Rumors

The vast majority of Londoners experienced a tragic loss of livelihood. Encamped in the open area known as Moorfields just to the north of the city, around 100,000 homeless and economically ruined citizens awaited some kind of gesture from the authorities. Rumors about the fire's origins had begun to spread, including whispers of a political plot.

On Thursday, Charles II arrived on horseback to address the crowds. Historian Antonia Fraser describes the scene that awaited the king there: "The grass was littered with rescued belongings, interspersed with ashes. The ruins of St Paul's provided a sombre background." The king's purpose was twofold that day: First he wanted to assess the damage, and the second was to depict the fire as a tragic accident. Fraser continues: "As [the king] addressed the people before him, his first care was to state with all the firmness at his command: There had been no plot."

Charles's statements fell largely on deaf ears. If the dry summer before the fire had made the city ripe for flames, London's political climate was at as much risk for a political firestorm. More than 40 years earlier, amid the religious turmoil among Protestant dissenters, Catholics, and the established Church of England, the Pilgrims had set sail on the *Mayflower* for the Americas. Since then, England had experienced a devastating civil war. Following the restoration of the monarchy under

From the Ashes: Rising Fortunes in the West End

WHILE ARCHITECT CHRISTOPHER WREN dreamed of creating a brave, new London, others envisioned an opportunity for lining their pockets when rebuilding after the fire. Some positive changes, such as building new houses out of brick and stone instead of wood, did occur. But since there was a pressing need to rebuild quickly, the old twisty street plan itself changed very little. Over the following decades, the city expanded to the west to create what is today called the West End. This triggered a boom that led to the rise of property speculators—men like Thomas Neale or Edward Wardour, whose memory lives on in the street names of London's Soho district. The most notorious profiteer of all was Nicholas Barbon, the son of a famous London preacher named Praise-God Barbon. Barbon was, in fact, a double beneficiary of the aftermath of the Great Fire. First, for throwing up poorly built structures, which he then sold at hugely inflated sums. Second, for setting up a fire-insurance business near the newly rebuilt Royal Exchange in 1681, with sufficient capital to insure up to 10,000 properties. Other beneficiaries were aristocrats such as the Grosvenors and Bedfords. Once rural estates to the west of the City, such as Mayfair, had now become prime real estate, ripe for development.

FLAMES CONSUME ONE OF LONDON'S MEDIEVAL GATES IN THIS WORK BY AN UNKNOWN 17TH-CENTURY ARTIST. YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

By 1670, some 6,000 *new houses* had been built on the site of the fire. A decade after the blaze, the capital was *thriving* again.

Charles II in 1658, religious tensions continued to simmer. Fueled by paranoia, and the sense that someone should be held to blame, elaborate rumors circulated that the city had been put to the torch as part of a Catholic conspiracy.

Wren Lends a Hand

Within weeks of the fire, drastic plans to rebuild the city were presented to the king. The most famous of these were drawn up by the great architect and astronomer Christopher Wren.

Charles saw himself as a reformer and a friend of science. Six years before, he had given his patronage to the Royal Society, co-founded by Wren and today the world's oldest national scientific society. For all the royal enthusiasm such plans received at the palace, however, commercial pressures favored as rapid a reconstruction as possible.

By 1670, some 6,000 new houses had been built on the site of the fire. A decade after the blaze, London was thriving again, its streets crammed with traders and craftsmen, workers crowding the river docks, taverns, and brothels. The vision of a rational urban plan had played little part in what was, in the end, a largely ad hoc project, adapting to pragmatic needs rather than a master plan.

There was one, notable exception, however: the churches. In total, Wren designed and built 51 churches—an astonishing achievement, capped only by the 52nd religious monument he designed for the post-fire city: the reconstruction of St. Paul's Cathedral, whose massive dome still dominates London's skyline today.

A World City

In October 1708, Wren's son was given the honor of laying the last piece on the new cathedral's spectacular dome. The monument would be officially inaugurated three years later, by which time, London was nearly unrecognizable from the city it had been before the fire. By 1760, its population reached 700,000. It would hit the one million mark around the year 1800 and became the largest city in the world around 1815.

The growth of the city mirrored the rapidly

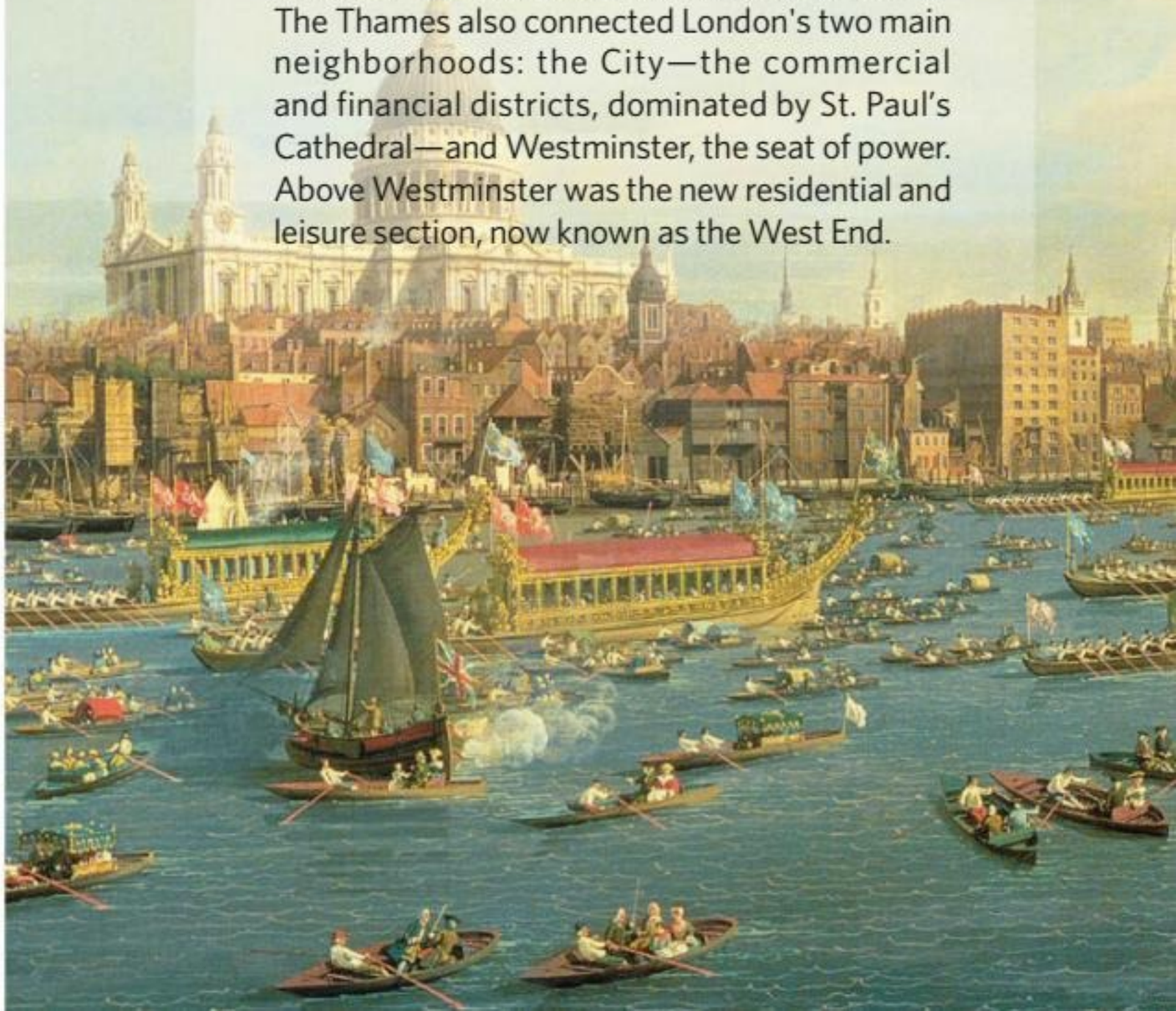
THE THAMES:

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

From the Thames to the World

Throughout London's long history, the River Thames has been an important connector. In the 1700s, the river was the channel by which goods arrived from all corners of the emerging British Empire. Historian Peter Ackroyd has written that, "It looked, from a distance, as if it were a forest of masts; there were approximately two thousand ships and boats each day upon the water, as well as three thousand of the then notorious watermen who transported goods and people in every direction."

The Thames also connected London's two main neighborhoods: the City—the commercial and financial districts, dominated by St. Paul's Cathedral—and Westminster, the seat of power. Above Westminster was the new residential and leisure section, now known as the West End.



LONDON'S LIFELINE

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

❶ *Seat of Power: Westminster Abbey*

In 1666, the abbey, and the nearby Parliament, were safely out of range of the flames. Dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1500s, the abbey church became the site of coronations and other state ceremonies.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

❷ *Thriving Commerce: Covent Garden*

Laid out in an orchard in 1630, and the site of a fruit, vegetable, and flower market until 1974, the square became the prototype for the development that sprang up to the west of the City after the fire.

GTRES

❸ *Business as Usual: The Royal Exchange*

Founded as a forum for traders and merchants in 1570, the Royal Exchange was destroyed in the Great Fire. The new building (above) was rapidly completed and first opened its doors in 1669.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

❹ *Sole Crossing: London Bridge*

Top-heavy with houses and shops, a section of London Bridge was consumed by the flames in 1666. The bridge remained the only means of crossing the Thames via wheeled transport until 1750.

LONDON: THE THAMES ON LORD MAYOR'S DAY, BY CANALETTO, CIRCA 1750, LOBKOWICZ PALACE, PRAGUE
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

FROM THE ASHES

Built on the charred ruins of its medieval predecessor, Christopher Wren's new St. Paul's Cathedral blended Gothic and neoclassical styles in homage both to the past and to the rationalism of the scientific age.

G. JACKSON/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

Shadowing the wealth and the glitter was *poverty.* Slums emerged—a far cry from the *optimistic* plans of Wren.

changing fortunes of England itself. Following the 1707 Act of Union, the newly created United Kingdom of Great Britain emerged as a global power. The river downstream from London Bridge opened up and ships traded products from all over the world. Here, at the heart of the emerging British Empire, new buildings spread westward, and the wealthy moved into the fashionable new districts around Oxford Street. London rapidly acquired three things closely associated with a modern city: light, information, and coffee. In 1736, a tax was levied to maintain 5,000 streetlamps, transforming the city after dark. By the end of the 18th century, around 278 newspapers were being published, mainly on, or near, Fleet Street. Londoners would meet to pore over them, and loudly debate the issues of the day in the city's numerous coffeehouses.

If the new West End was the center of leisure, the former site of the Great Fire became the center of commerce and housed—as it still does—the Bank of England (established in 1694); the new Royal Exchange, rebuilt after the fire; and insurance companies such as Lloyd's, which took its name from the coffee shop opened by its founder, Edward Lloyd, in 1688.

Shadowing the new wealth and the glitter, of course, was grinding poverty. A far cry from the optimistic urban planning of Wren, slums sprang up. Artist William Hogarth captured much of the folly and vice of this new London, including the problems caused by vanity and alcohol.

London's dynamism and its misery were taken up by writers such as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and later, Charles Dickens—men who gave voice to the complex experience of the modern city. From the time of the Great Fire onward, the rich drama of London fascinated observers. Few have summed it up better than James Boswell, who in 1763 regarded the city as "comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible."

JOURNALIST AND FORMER RADIO PERSONALITY VICTOR LLORET BLACKBURN IS THE DEPUTY EDITOR OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC *HISTORY.*

VANITIES AND

MARRIAGE À-LA-MODE: THE TOILETTE (1743), BY WILLIAM HOGARTH, NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

A MIDNIGHT MODERN CONVERSATION (1732), BY WILLIAM HOGARTH, YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

VICES

Artist **William Hogarth** (1697-1764) was an unflinching chronicler of his native London. His work offered an acerbic commentary on both the grim conditions of the city's poor and, as shown here, the excesses and vanity of its idle rich.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Frivolity in the Dressing Room

Women from the moneyed classes in London would often socialize during "the toilette"—a French custom adopted by members of the city's elite, in which a lady would receive visitors while she was dressing. Here, Hogarth satirizes the superficiality and vanity of the rich in a city awash with foreign goods and customs. The guests include ① an Italian castrato who sings while accompanied by a flautist, ② a French dancing master, and ③ a woman moved by the performance as a servant offers her hot chocolate. The hostess, ④ a recently married countess, sits in front of the mirror while a French hairdresser crimps her hair and ⑤ her lover woos her.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

A MID-18TH-CENTURY PENDANT MADE OF PINK DIAMONDS AND ENAMELED PEARLS. BLOOM & SON, LONDON

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Debauchery in a Gentlemen's Club

According to a French traveler, a gentleman in 18th-century London did not tire himself out with work. He rose late in the morning to breakfast, had dinner at five, and went to a tavern or drinking club in the evening. The surrender of the professional classes to debauchery is satirized here by Hogarth, who shows ① a drunk politician about to be burned with a candle, ② a smoking lawyer serving punch, and ③ a fop who looks as if he is about to be sick. Wearing a red coat, ④ an army veteran falls off his chair, after failing to clink glasses with ⑤ the legless doctor. The clock ⑥ reads four o'clock in the morning, meaning that they have all been carousing for hours. Empty bottles littering ⑦ the floor testify to the excesses of the session . . . to be repeated, perhaps, the next night.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

18TH-CENTURY ENGRAVED SILVER TANKARD
NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

ANTIETAM

THE FIGHT TO PRESERVE THE PAST

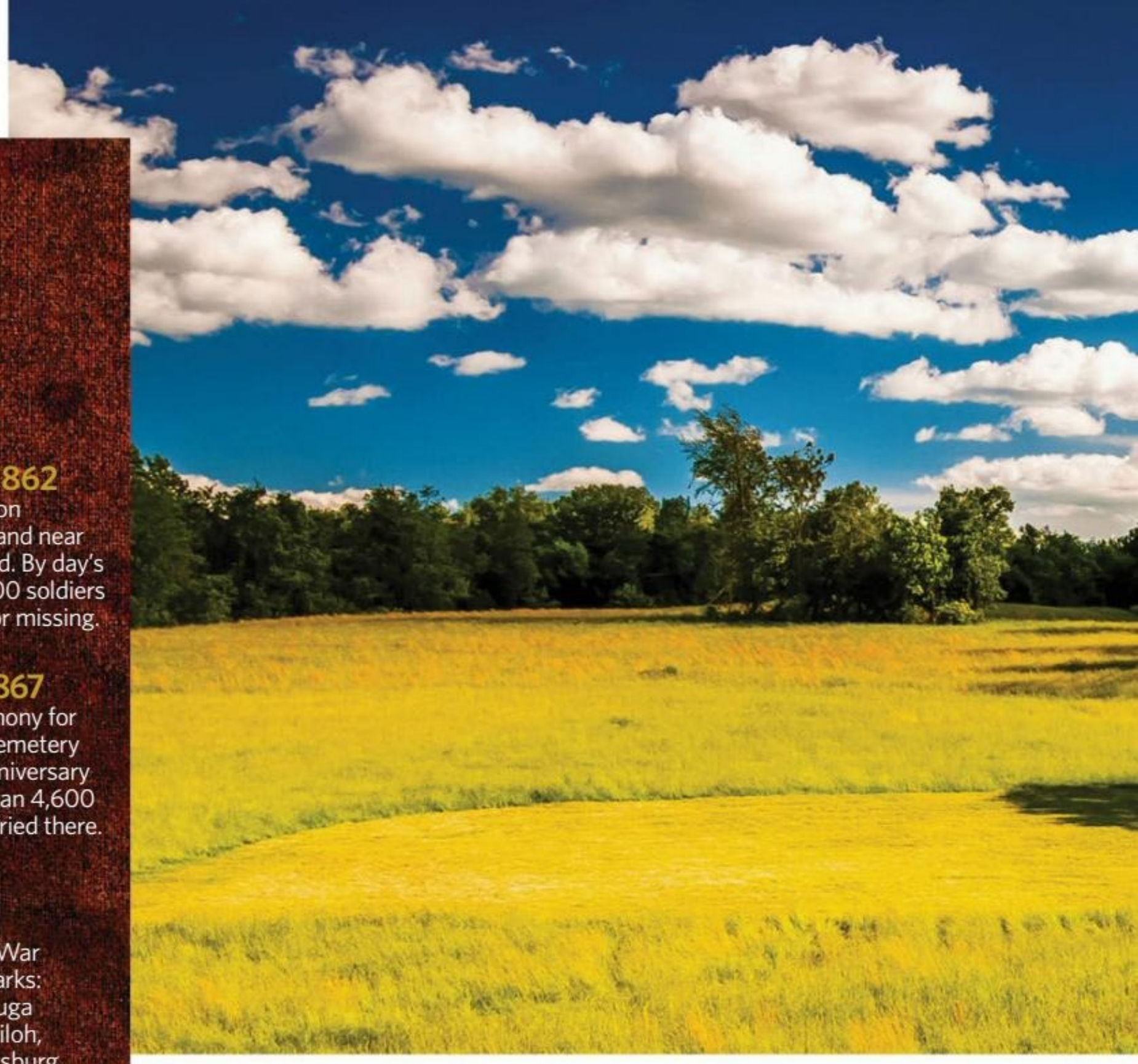
A SOLDIER'S PERSPECTIVE

After witnessing the battle firsthand, Capt. James Hope of the Second Vermont Infantry painted Burnside Bridge in "The Battle of Antietam (1862): A Crucial Delay." Below: A bullet tore a hole in this Union canteen recovered from the battlefield.

WATERCOLOR: EDWARD OWEN/ART RESOURCE/SCALA, FLORENCE
CANTEEN: DON TROIANI/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

The bloodiest day in American history, September 17, 1862, saw the devastating clash between the Union and the Confederacy in the rolling fields of rural Maryland. Standing today as a monument to their sacrifice and a reminder of the horrors of war, Antietam National Battlefield endures because of a decades-long movement to protect these historic lands.

O. JAMES LIGHTHIZER



Saving a National Treasure

September 17, 1862
Confederate and Union forces clash on farmland near Sharpsburg, Maryland. By day's end, more than 22,000 soldiers are dead, wounded, or missing.

September 17, 1867
The dedication ceremony for Antietam National Cemetery is held on the fifth anniversary of the battle. More than 4,600 Union soldiers are buried there.

1890s
The U.S. government establishes five Civil War national battlefield parks: Antietam, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg.

1897
To educate visitors about the battle, the U.S. War Department builds an almost 60-foot-tall stone observation tower near Bloody Lane.

1933
Responsibility for national battlefields transfers to the National Park Service, which will begin major renovation and preservation efforts at Antietam in the 1950s.

1988
U.S. Representative Beverly Byron sponsors a bill allowing the National Park Service to acquire more lands at Antietam. The bill's passage begins a new push for historic preservation.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL IN 2016.
STEPHEN ST. JOHN

As the morning sun rises above Antietam National Battlefield, it illuminates a vast spread of hallowed ground protected as a place to remember and honor the ultimate sacrifice made by so many young Americans more than a century ago.

The sight of the retreating morning mists at Antietam always makes me reflect on that awful day—September 17, 1862, the bloodiest single day in American history—when nearly 22,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed, missing, or wounded in combat outside Sharpsburg, Maryland. This epic battle was a political watershed as well, allowing President Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, a decisive step forward to end slavery.

In my work as president of the Civil War Trust, I have visited nearly all of the 122 battlefields in 23 states where the organization has been active. Since 1987, when a private national movement to protect these battlefields emerged, the trust has saved more than 43,000 acres of hallowed ground.

MONUMENTAL SERVICE
Antietam's McKinley Monument marks where Sgt. (later President) William McKinley "served 'hot coffee' and 'warm food' to . . . the Regiment, on this spot and in doing so had to pass under fire" during the battle.
APPALACHIAN VIEWS/GETTY IMAGES

And yet Antietam, which captured my imagination long before I became involved in historic preservation as a government official or accepted the trust's presidency in 1999, remains my favorite battlefield. It is where I feel the strongest connection to the past. As I stand at the edge of the bloody Cornfield on the Miller Farm, a small plot of land where thousands fell, I can well imagine the fear Union soldiers felt as they marched out of the North Woods in the predawn gloom on that fateful September day.

Antietam resonates because the battlefield and the town of Sharpsburg look much as they did a century and a half ago. Instead of shopping centers or strip malls, you find a sleepy Maryland town with quaint shops tucked in among the many wartime houses still standing on Main Street. The most popular small business in town may be Nutter's Ice Cream, where the line of customers snakes out the door and up the sidewalk each summertime weekend.

Stepping Back in Time

Today, the battlefield consists of 1,937 acres owned and overseen by the National Park Service within a congressionally authorized battlefield boundary of 3,263 acres—a far cry from the original size of the park at its founding more than a century ago, when it measured a mere 17 acres. Within the battlefield's boundaries, an additional 876 acres have been saved by nonprofit preservation groups, including the Civil War Trust. Another 450 acres remain unprotected.

Still, Antietam is a preservation success story. Almost all of the land where the fiercest fighting took place has been saved for future generations. From the Cornfield to the Dunker Church, from Bloody Lane to Burnside Bridge, it all looks much as it did during the Civil War, allowing the history to resonate in a more immediate way.

There's nothing quite like walking along the bank of Antietam Creek downstream from Burnside Bridge, through the shade of the creekside woods, to visit tiny Snavely Ford, where Union troops crossed during the battle while their comrades were stymied trying to

LONE STAR
American artist Don Troiani depicts the doomed First Texas Regiment's battle for the Cornfield, in which 82 percent of its men were lost.
DON TROIANI/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

BURNSIDE BRIDGE
Built in 1836, this stone bridge played a crucial role in the battle. Led by General Burnside, Union troops were kept from crossing the creek for three hours by about 500 Confederates.
KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

secure the bridge. It provides battlefield tourists with an unparalleled visitor experience.

The unprecedented slaughter at Antietam is almost inconceivable, both to us today, and especially to those who experienced it. "When I think of the battle of Antietam, it seems so strange," wrote Dr. William Child, assistant surgeon of the Fifth New Hampshire, in a letter to his wife on October 7, 1862. "Who permits it? To see or feel that a power is in existence that can and will hurl masses of men against each other in deadly conflict—slaying each other by the thousands—mangling and deforming their fellow men—is almost impossible. But it is so—and why we cannot know." At Smoketown Hospital, Child endured the tragic aftermath of the battle performing countless amputations and surgeries, watching, powerless, as wounded men in his care died each day.

The Horror of Antietam

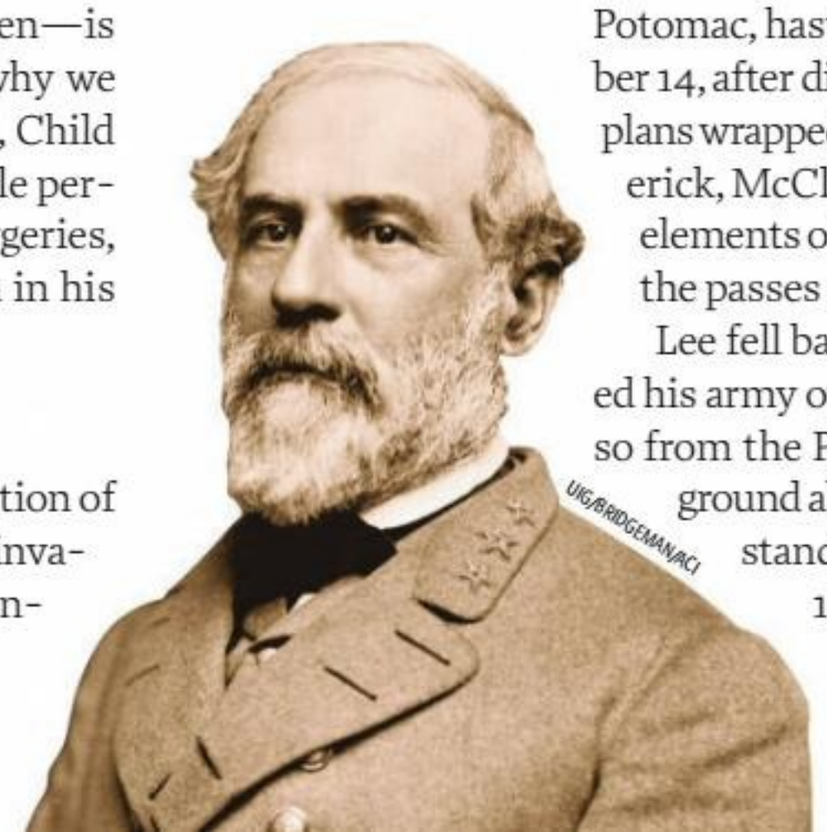
The Battle of Antietam was the culmination of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North—which occurred contemporaneously with southern incursions into Union-held territory in Kentucky. After a string of Confederate successes in the spring and summer of 1862 led to a decisive southern victory at the Battle of Second Manassas, Lee took the war out of Virginia and invaded Maryland. After occupying Frederick, on September 6, 1862, he split his army into three elements, sending Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's command to capture the Union arsenal at Harpers Ferry.

Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, reinstated as commander of a reunited Union Army of the Potomac, hastily set out after Lee. On September 14, after discovering a copy of Lee's invasion plans wrapped around three cigars outside Frederick, McClellan attacked and defeated those elements of the Confederate army defending the passes of South Mountain.

Lee fell back and, the next day, concentrated his army outside Sharpsburg, only a mile or so from the Potomac River. Here, on the high ground above Antietam Creek, he made his stand. Before first light on September 17, with stars still twinkling in the

WEST POINT EDUCATION

In 1829, Robert E. Lee (below) graduated from West Point. He returned there in 1852 to serve as superintendent and was responsible for the training of many of the soldiers who would fight for—and against—him during the Civil War.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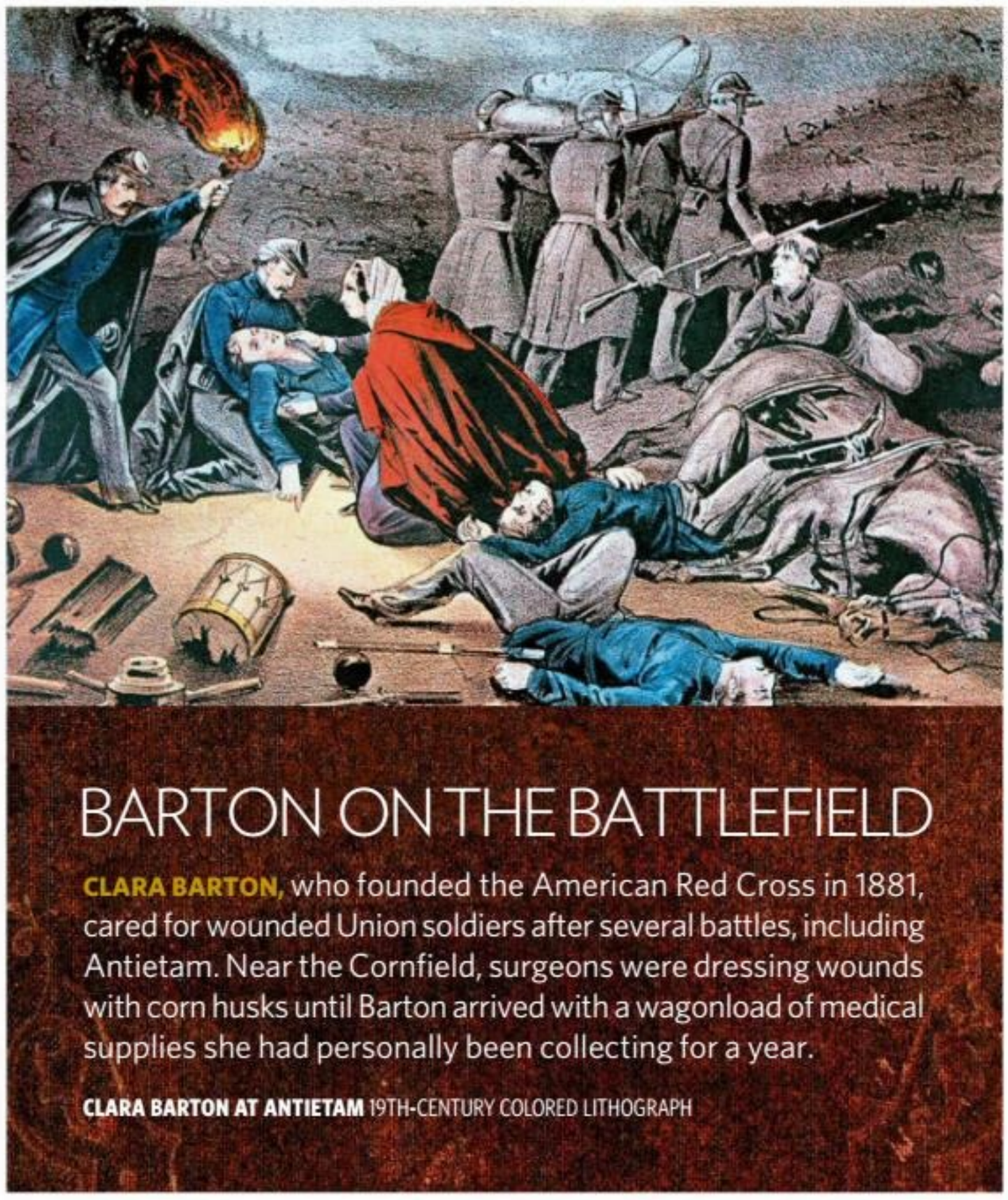

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BARTON ON THE BATTLEFIELD

CLARA BARTON, who founded the American Red Cross in 1881, cared for wounded Union soldiers after several battles, including Antietam. Near the Cornfield, surgeons were dressing wounds with corn husks until Barton arrived with a wagonload of medical supplies she had personally been collecting for a year.

CLARA BARTON AT ANTIETAM 19TH-CENTURY COLORED LITHOGRAPH

sky, a Union army corps advanced out of the North Woods toward a distant landmark—the simple, whitewashed Dunker Church. As they reached the Cornfield, fierce fighting broke out. The battle in the Cornfield and beyond raged for about three hours as both sides took, lost, and retook disputed land between the Cornfield and the church. The combat was so brutal that one Confederate regiment, the First Texas, lost 82 percent of its men.

At about 9:15 a.m., more than 5,300 Union troops in long battle lines marched from the east, passed the church, and occupied the West Woods, where they were immediately attacked on three sides and annihilated. In 20 minutes, more than 2,200 Union soldiers were killed or wounded. Other Union units turned south, launching repeated attacks on Confederates massed in a sunken farm road and, ultimately, forcing Confederate withdrawal around noon.

In the next phase, about 500 Confederates stopped Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's entire corps from crossing Antietam Creek for about three hours. The three-arch stone bridge that was the Union objective was immediately renamed Burnside Bridge. After finally crossing, the corps advanced toward Sharpsburg in the early afternoon, with scant opposition, until the timely arrival of Confederate Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill's division from Harpers Ferry, which entered the fray and stopped Burnside cold.

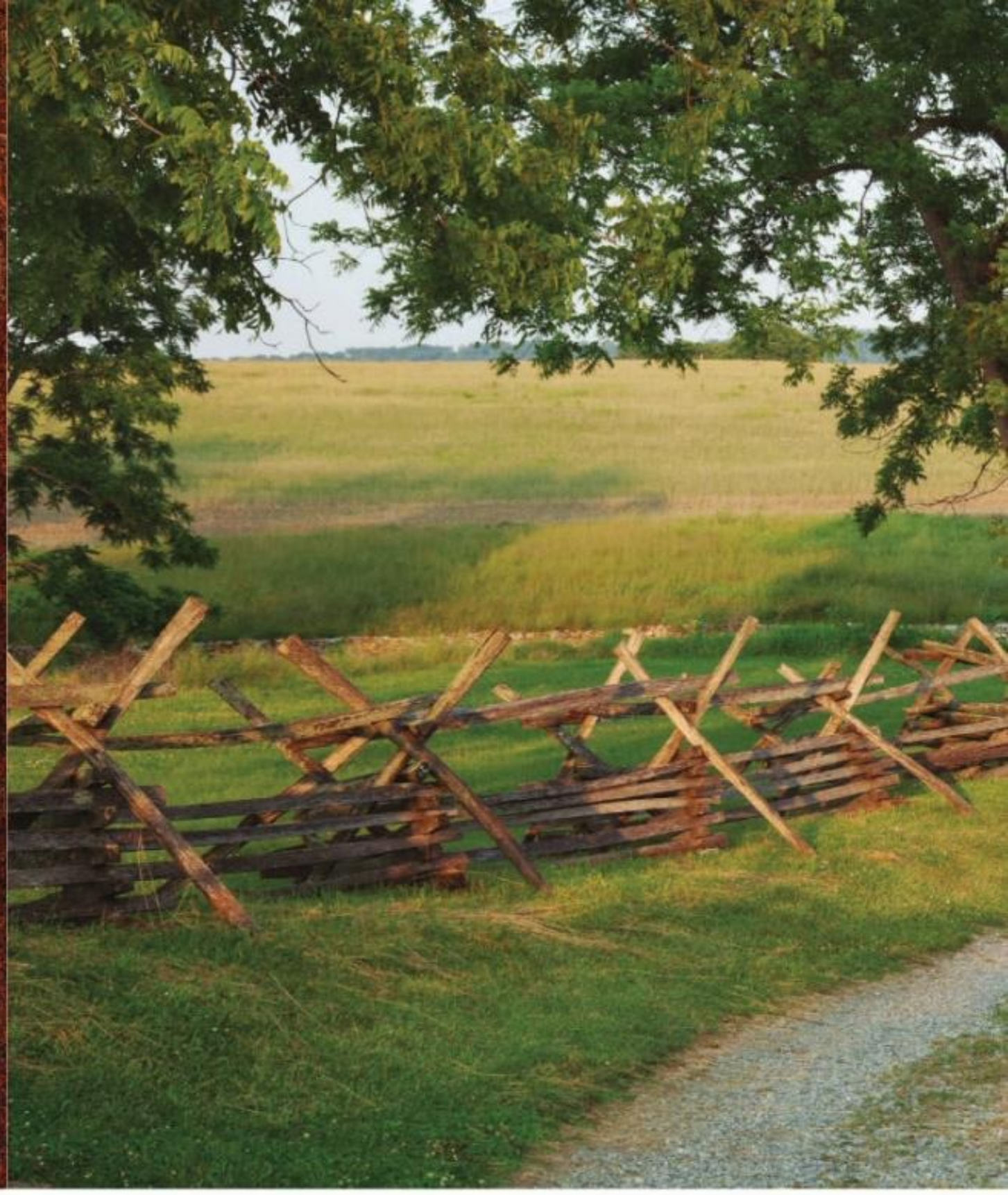
Thus ended the Battle of Antietam. The two armies remained in position the next day, burying their dead and gathering the wounded under flags of truce. Early on September 19, Lee slipped back across the Potomac into Virginia. Although the battle is considered a draw, the Army of the Potomac remained in possession of the battlefield and eliminated the threat to Pennsylvania.

The Battle of Antietam was a momentous political moment as well. News from the war front was enough for Lincoln to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22. The North's war aim transformed from just saving the Union to ending the curse of slavery as well. Soon, Great Britain, which had been close to recognizing the nascent southern nation, lost interest in

KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Bloody Lane: Then and Now

This bucolic dirt road (right) was the site of some of the Civil War's most horrific action. As September 17, 1862, drew to a close, heaps of soldiers lay dead or wounded on the field and in the Sunken Road (above). One Union survivor wrote, "In this road there lay so many dead rebels that they formed a line which one might have walked upon as far as I could see."



supporting a cause that perpetuated the evils of human bondage.

The armies moved on, leaving the Sharpsburg area in shock and ruins, with a blanket of stench from decaying bodies that filled nostrils for weeks afterward. Every farm in the area had become a makeshift field hospital, and the farmers found that their debris-littered fields had become cemeteries for mass and individual battlefield graves.

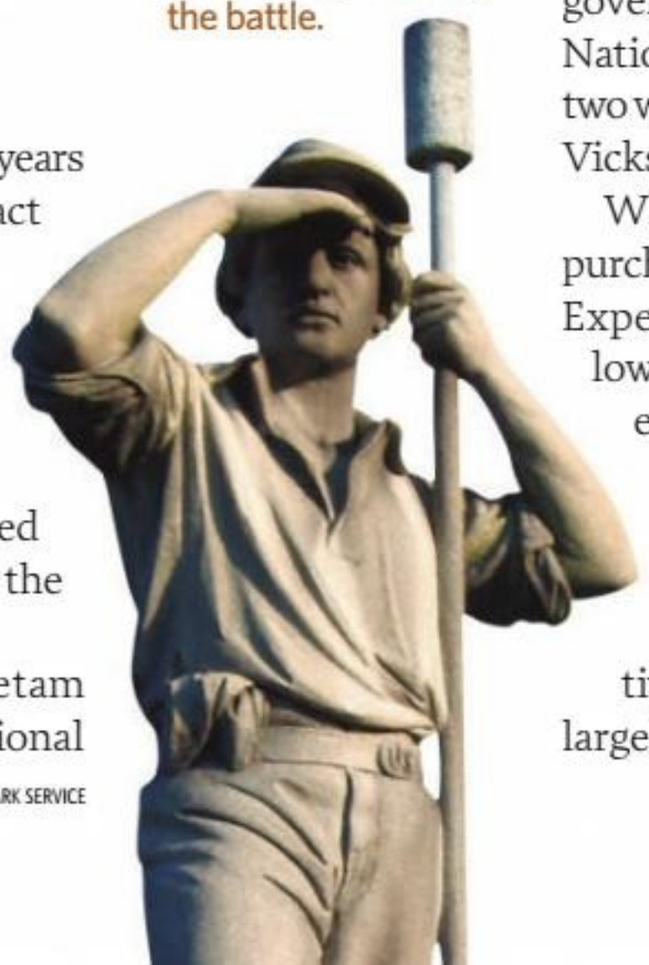
Saving a National Shrine

The story of the battlefield in the 150-plus years after the battle is long and colorful. The fact that Antietam is so well preserved today is due to a lot of hard work by countless dedicated people—but in large measure it is also due to simple good luck. As late as 1988, the famous Cornfield was still privately owned, and its owner wanted to preserve the land instead of developing the property.

The first effort to memorialize Antietam came with the establishment of the National Cemetery, which was dedicated on September 17, 1867, after the reburial of 4,695 Union soldiers from 19 states, of which about a third had been removed from battlefield graves. The rest of the battlefield remained what it was before the war: privately owned farms.

IN MEMORIAM

Veterans groups erected Antietam's 96 battlefield monuments, such as Durell's Battery D Pennsylvania Artillery (below). Each one is typically located where the troops fought during the battle.



KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Antietam National Battlefield was established in 1890—the second of five Civil War battlefield parks created in that decade by the federal government. Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park predated it by less than two weeks; Shiloh (1894), Gettysburg (1895), and Vicksburg (1899) all followed.

While the other parks were established with purchases of large tracts of land, the so-called Experiment at Antietam was designed as a low-budget affair to reduce costs. The government's Antietam plan called for the purchase of very limited acreage to create rights of way for traveling through the battlefield, assuming that the rest of the battlefield would remain productive farmland. By 1895, the original park was largely complete, totaling only 17 acres—big

WILLARD/GETTY IMAGES

enough for the tour route and a few feet of land on either side of it. Five miles of gravel roads were built and more than 400 descriptive tablets were installed in the ground along the route. Most of these are still in place today.

In 1933, when the battlefield was transferred from the jurisdiction of the War Department to the National Park Service, little had changed. The area had remained largely rural, but intrusions had begun to appear. A single family home went up on the creek embankment where the Confederates defended Burnside Bridge. A sandwich shop opened in a dwelling at the head of Bloody Lane. And after a windstorm blew down the Dunker Church in 1921, a frame building was constructed on the foundation. By the 1930s, the Dunker Church site was the home of Poffenberger's Lunch Room.

The park continued to remain largely unchanged until the late 1950s, when the Park Service began its ambitious, decadelong Mission 66 program to upgrade national parks. Antietam began to see major changes. In 1962, a new visitor center opened. The Dunker Church was rebuilt and rededicated on the original foundation, using some the original materials, which had been saved some 40 years earlier by a forward-thinking local farmer.

The first major development threat came in the 1960s. Local preservationists successfully fought off a power company's bid to build obtrusive power lines right next to the battlefield. Unfortunately, the worst scarring of the battlefield also occurred in this decade, when the state of Maryland built a bypass around the area where Hagerstown Pike (Route 65) runs past the visitor center, the Dunker Church, and the Miller Farm. The state claimed the original road was ill-suited to handle regular traffic as well as battlefield tourist traffic. Unfortunately, the bypass cuts through the heart of the original West Woods battlefield, and still today separates a significant part of the western side of the battlefield from the park, and

DUNKER CHURCH

Built by local German farmers in 1852, the Dunker Church sat in the middle of Union assaults. Alexander Gardner captured this harrowing image (below) of Confederate dead in front of the church after the battle.

KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Hitting Home: Battle Photography at Antietam

THE AFTERMATH of the Battle of Antietam played host to a groundbreaking moment in photojournalism. Alexander Gardner, working for the famous Mathew B. Brady, became the first photographer to capture images of American dead where they fell in battle. The gruesome scenes delivered the horror of the war to the northern homefront for the first time, especially when seen in 3-D, the photography standard during the Civil War. The stereograph, the "video of Civil War America," was Gardner's primary format. His "Incidents of the War" stereo views and photos were marketed nationally through one of history's first mail-order catalogs. Gardner took more than 100 images and all 20 photos of the dead were created in 3-D. The impact was stunning. "If [Brady] has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it," the *New York Times* reported when the photos went on display at Brady's gallery a month after the battle.

1

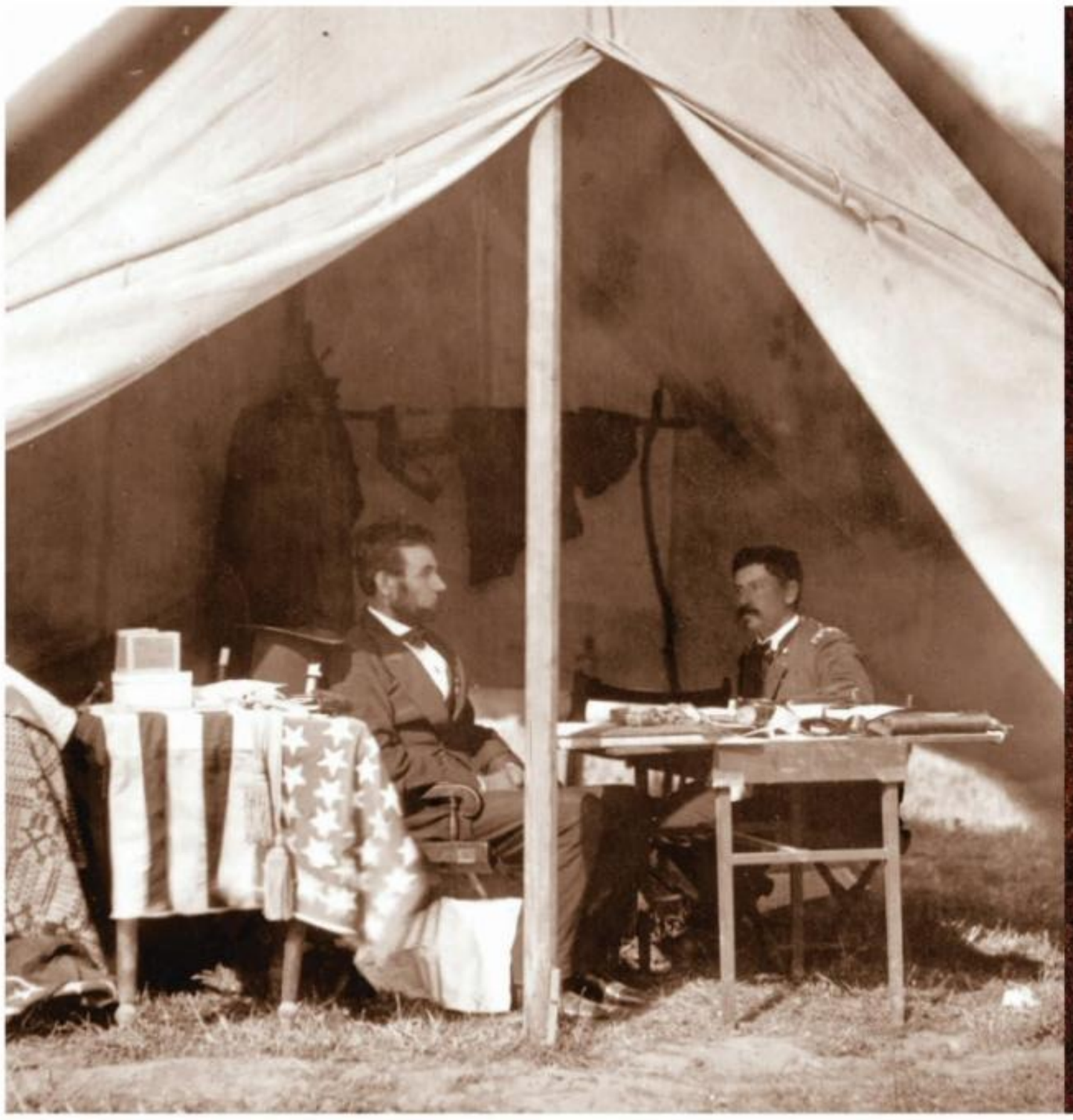
2

3

1 KEEPING WATCH SEVERAL SOLDIERS STAND NEAR A BATTLEFIELD GRAVE IN THIS SOMBER IMAGE. **2 CONFEDERATE DEAD** THE FALLEN BODIES OF SOUTHERN SOLDIERS LIE ON THE BATTLEFIELD. **3 NINETEENTH-CENTURY STEREO CAMERA** **4 FIELD HOSPITAL** DR. ANSON HURD (CENTER) TENDS THE CONFEDERATE WOUNDED.

4

PHOTOS: KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; INTERFOTO/ALAMY/ACI (CAMERA)



KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

FIVE DAYS AFTER Union "victory" at the Battle of Antietam, President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation, a decree ordering that all slaves in states currently in rebellion be considered free by the federal government unless those states rejoined the Union by January 1, 1863. Lincoln formally signed the proclamation three months later, changing the legal status of the enslaved to that of free people. African Americans could now enlist in the Union's armed forces, and by war's end nearly 200,000 men had served. Lincoln's decree made abolition one of the Union's primary objectives. Although the proclamation only applied to the rebelling states, it did pave the way for the 13th Amendment, which officially ended slavery.

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN VISITS MAJ. GEN. GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN (RIGHT) AT HIS HEADQUARTERS IN OCTOBER 1862.

it eradicated Confederate Avenue—a key part of the original tour route. What was seen as a major park improvement 50 years ago is viewed today as unfortunate and ill planned.

At this time, the Park Service also began adding acreage to the park, which led to protests from local farmers who feared that the government planned to take their properties. To appease the farmers, Congress decreed in 1962 that no more than 600 additional acres could be purchased outright for the battlefield park. By 1975, the park had grown to 810 acres, and federal law said it could grow no more.

Halting Progress

The late 1980s and early 1990s were one of the most active periods in the history of Civil War battlefield protection. Spurred by the threats facing many battlefields, including a high-profile proposal for a shopping center at Manassas, Virginia, the modern preservation movement emerged with the creation of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS), the original Civil War Trust, and the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP).

In 1985, a developer proposed building a shopping center on the Grove Farm at Sharpsburg's western outskirts. Soon after, a second development project emerged to build 10 homes on this farm, where Lincoln and McClellan met and posed for a famous photograph during the president's visit to the battlefield two and a half weeks after the battle. The Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF) was founded in 1986 to fight these threats. It took 10 years of court battles and hard work, but eventually the entire farm was saved.

Forty acres of the farm was acquired in 1991 for $325,000 thanks to a groundbreaking partnership among these new private preservation groups, Civil War roundtables, the Maryland Environmental Trust, and the federal government. The final parcel was secured four years later.

The Park Service was legally prohibited from buying more land to add to the battlefield park until 1988, when U.S. Representative Beverly Byron successfully pushed legislation through

GENERAL BURNSIDE

In addition to his military service, General Burnside's distinctive facial hair kept his legacy alive. Now better known as sideburns, the hairstyle's name was derived from the general's surname.

LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

A PEACEFUL RESTING PLACE
The "Private Soldier" monument looks out over Antietam National Cemetery. There are 4,776 Union remains buried here from the Battle of Antietam and other battles in Maryland.

D. TROZZO/ALAMY/ACI

Congress to lift the size restriction. The following year, Byron went back to work and secured $1 million in the federal budget for additional land acquisition at Antietam.

Also in 1989, the Conservation Fund bought 145 acres of the Miller Farm, including the bloody Cornfield, and donated it to the park. But when the Park Service began studying whether to expand the battlefield's official boundary so it could potentially buy more land, local landowners demonstrated in front of the visitor center protesting further expansion. The state of Maryland stepped in with a solution that made both sides happy. It offered landowners the chance to keep ownership of their properties, but protect the land by selling the development rights to conservation entities, relieving much of the tension between local landowners and the federal government. The state began to issue grants to buy the development rights through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

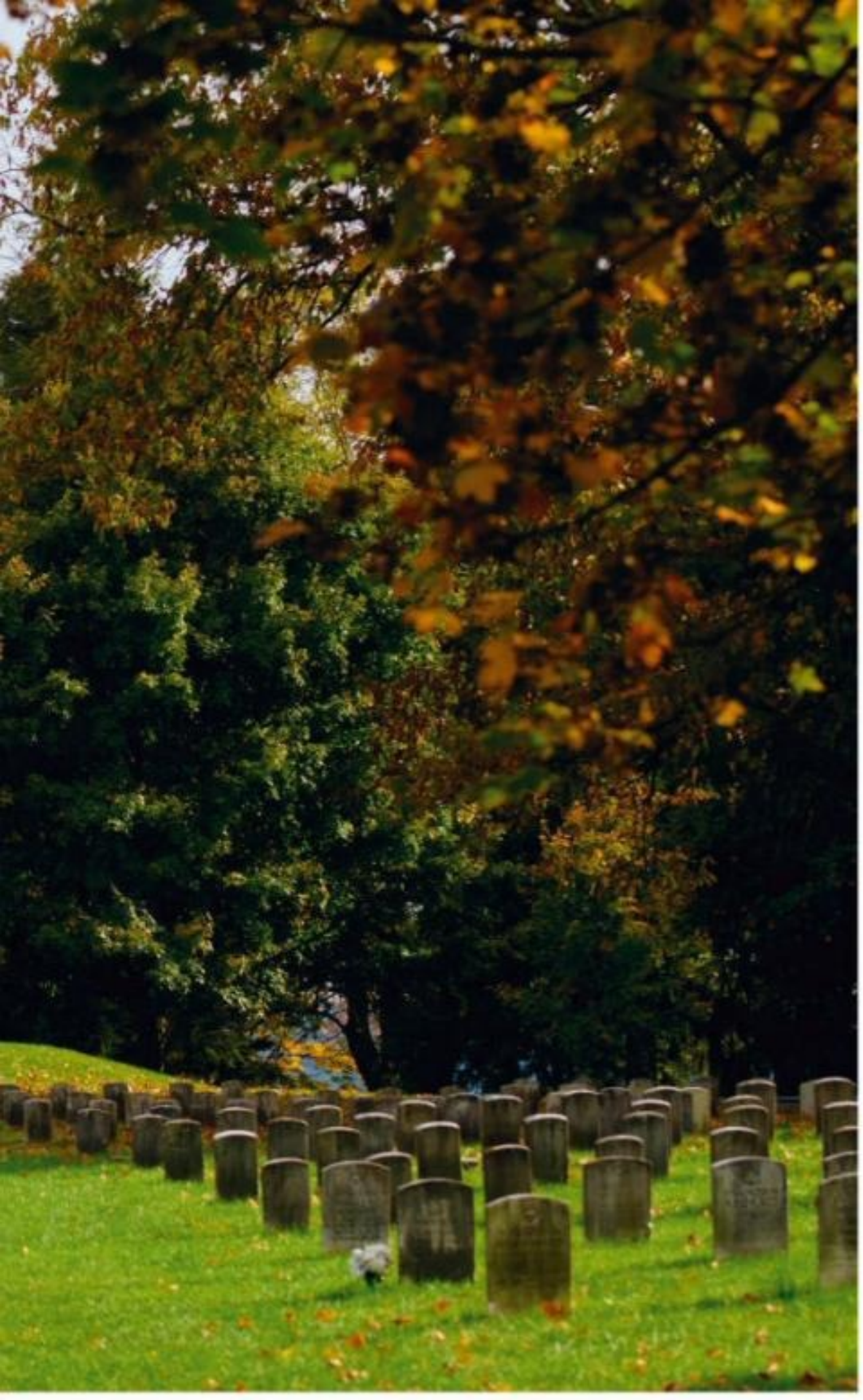
When I became Maryland secretary of transportation in 1991, the federal government had just approved the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which included a program to acquire land or nondevelopment easements to preserve scenic vistas and historic sites along transportation arteries. I took advantage of Maryland's existing program to kick this new preservation initiative into high gear. Among other successes, we convinced the state to agree to match any ISTEA funding.

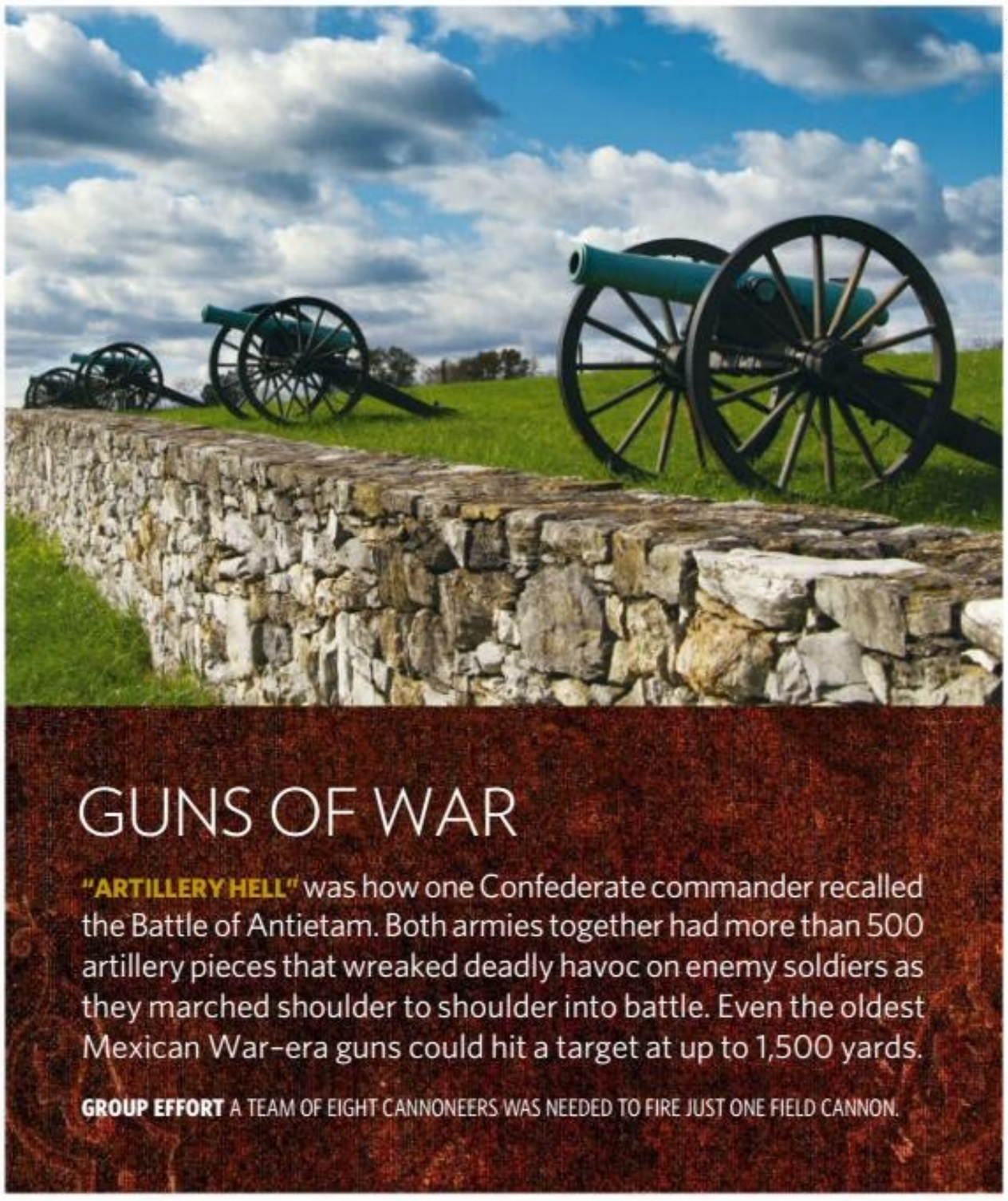
My right-hand man in this effort was H. Grant Dehart, the head of the Maryland Environmental Trust and the state's Program Open Space. We were soon able to purchase easements through grant programs, demonstrating for the first time that the use of federal funds for easements rather than outright land purchases was an effective and efficient use of such funding—especially when matched by the state. This allowed further expansion of our preservation efforts.

The result was nothing short of spectacular. From 1991 through 2014, while the federal government was increasing the size of Antietam National Battlefield by about 60 percent, the state's efforts protected an additional 8,700 acres across 61 properties on and around the

COMMANDING VIEWS
Built by the War Department in 1897, Antietam's stone observation tower (below) stands almost 60 feet tall. The tower was meant to give visitors an all-encompassing view of the battlefield.

KEITH SNYDER, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE





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GUNS OF WAR

"ARTILLERY HELL" was how one Confederate commander recalled the Battle of Antietam. Both armies together had more than 500 artillery pieces that wreaked deadly havoc on enemy soldiers as they marched shoulder to shoulder into battle. Even the oldest Mexican War–era guns could hit a target at up to 1,500 yards.

GROUP EFFORT A TEAM OF EIGHT CANNONEERS WAS NEEDED TO FIRE JUST ONE FIELD CANNON.

battlefield. To date, the easement program has been so successful that Maryland has protected more than 862,000 acres statewide.

Amazingly, though, until just last year, some of the most historic land at Antietam—several significant tracts in the heart of the battlefield—remained privately owned, protected only by weak easements. And I am proud to say that in 2015 and 2016, thanks to the personal generosity of tens of thousands of members all around the world, the Civil War Trust has saved four properties in this category.

These crucial purchases include the 44-acre Wilson Tract, sandwiched between the visitor center and the Cornfield, as well as a 9.1-acre tract next to the Dunker Church containing several modern structures, and a 5.6-acre parcel in the heart of the East Woods, acquired not long after the owner erected a large metal building near a postwar house on the property. All of the modern structures will eventually be removed to help return the land to its 1862 appearance. Perpetual easements will be placed on each property, ensuring that they will all be protected.

Work still remains to be done, including full preservation of some remaining privately owned tracts at Antietam. Easements may also be secured on a number of properties outside the park boundary—not to mention parcels located at Maryland's many other Civil War battlefields and sites.

But, today, if you look out across Antietam battlefield from the perch of the observation tower at Bloody Lane, nearly every farm, field, and pasture as far as the eye can see is protected open space. I am proud to have been a part of this amazing effort to ensure that the same historic vistas I enjoy—and the same pristine battlefield that has made Antietam my favorite hallowed ground in America—will remain unchanged for generations to come, allowing our children and our children's children to witness, study, and honor the sacrifices made there to create the nation we are today. ■

O. JAMES LIGHTHIZER HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE CIVIL WAR TRUST SINCE 1999. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, THE ORGANIZATION HAS SAVED MORE THAN 42,500 ACRES OF BATTLEFIELD LAND.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR TRUST AT **CIVILWAR.ORG.**

Antietam National Battlefield

1862 to present

Potomac R.

HAGERSTOWN PIKE

J. Poffenberger Farm

North Woods

Nicodemus Farm

D.R. Miller Farm

SMOKETOWN ROAD

The Cornfield

East Woods

Wilson Tract

C

Mumma Farm

West Woods

D

Dunker Church

Roulette Farm

Visitor Center

Pry House (McClellan's headquarters)

Sunken Road (Bloody Lane)

War Department Tower

Antietam Creek

HAGERSTOWN PIKE

H. Piper Farm

Middle Bridge

BOONSBORO PIKE

Sharpsburg

Lutheran church

A

Lee's Headquarters

HARPER'S FERRY ROAD

Sherrick Farm

J. Otto Farm

Burnside Bridge

B

Snavely Ford

A National Cemetery, dedicated 1867

B Connecticut Land, dedicated 1894

C Philadelphia Brigade Park, dedicated 1895

D New York State Monument, dedicated 1919

Land preserved by the National Park Service, 1933

Land preserved by the National Park Service, 1962

Land preserved by the National Park Service, 2016

Land preserved by the Civil War Trust, 2016

Scenic easement

0 1,000

YARDS

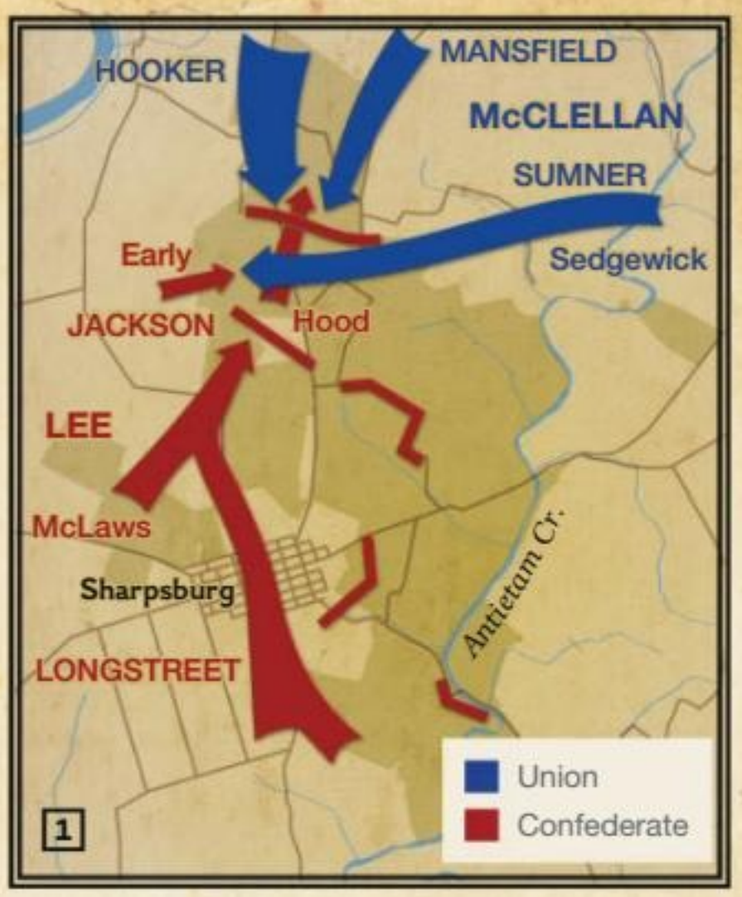
STEVEN STANLEY; NG MAPS

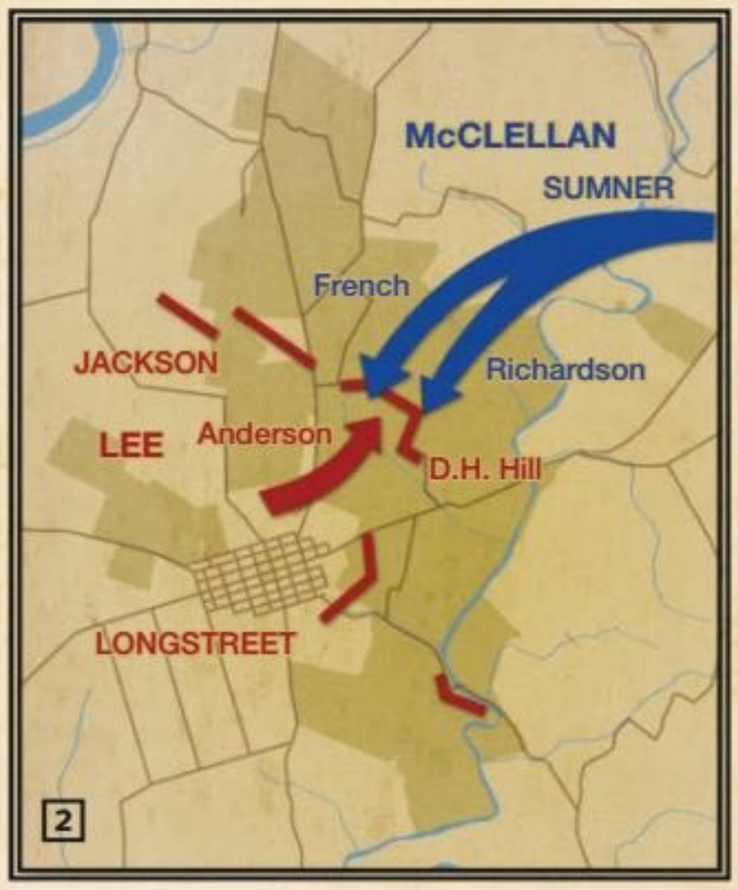
SOURCES: CIVIL WAR TRUST; NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

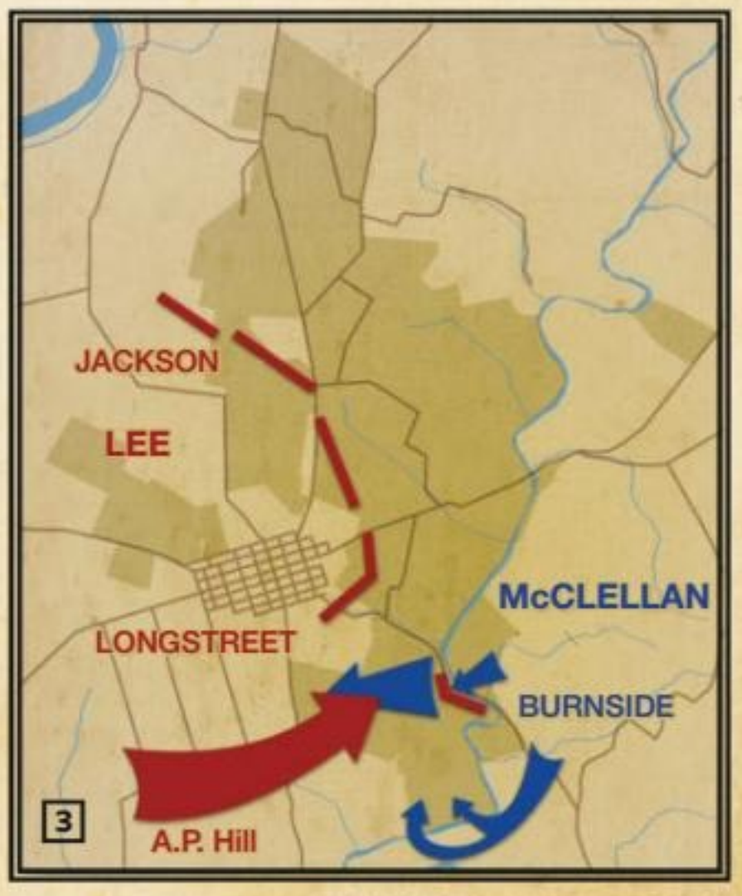
PRESERVING HISTORY

Saving Antietam National Battlefield has been a lengthy, successful process, thanks to the careful stewardship of several different organizations dedicated to the preservation and restoration of America's historical treasures.

Protecting the lands that make up Antietam National Battlefield was an effort that began more than 150 years ago. Located between the Union and the Confederacy, the Maryland town of Sharpsburg found itself sandwiched between the two enemy forces on September 17, 1862. The battle raged around the town and the surrounding farmlands, covering the fields with the dead and wounded. These same fields would become the impromptu grave sites for many of them. In 1864, Maryland decided to create a national cemetery for the men who had fought there. Just over 11 acres were purchased in 1865, bodies were exhumed and relocated, and the site was dedicated in 1867. Because of lingering strife between the Union and former Confederate states, only Union dead were buried there. Confederate graves were relocated to several other locations in Maryland. This cemetery became the seed not only for the Antietam National Battlefield, but for other national movements to honor America's history.







WAGING BATTLE

1 ***Firing the First Shots***
Commanded by George McClellan, the Army of the Potomac attacks Robert E. Lee's forces near Sharpsburg, Maryland, on September 17, 1862. North and South clash back and forth through the Cornfield and the West Woods for most of the morning.

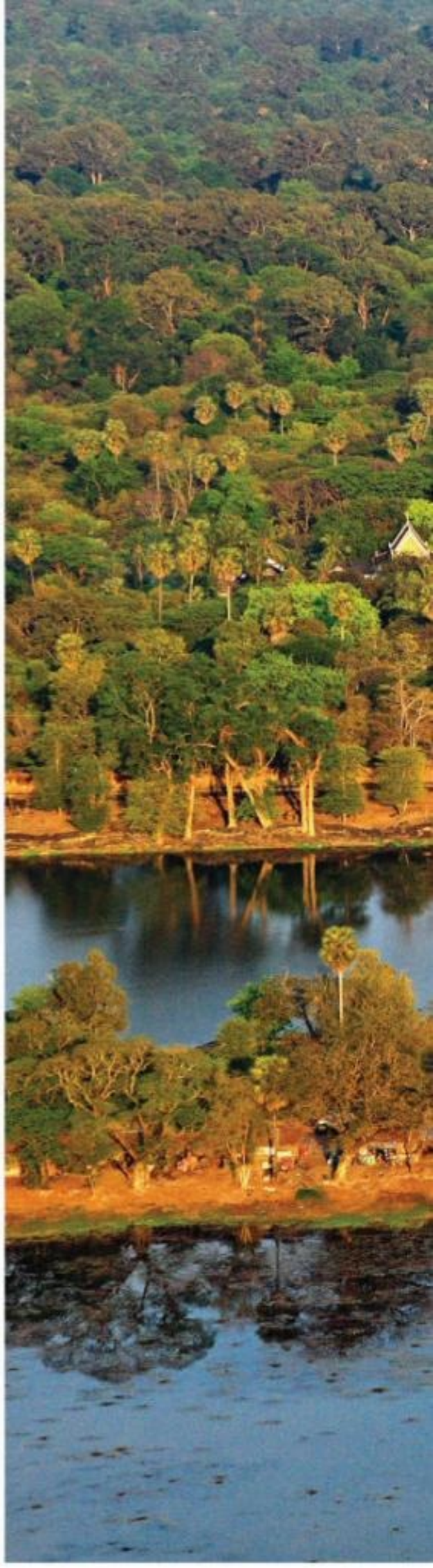
2 ***Breaking the Lines***
Later in the day, Union forces focus on the center of the battlefield with assaults against the Sunken Road. They finally pierce the Confederate center after a terrible struggle and huge loss of life. The corpses piled along the road give the site its new moniker: Bloody Lane.

VETERAN'S MEDAL FROM THE 1920 DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE NEW YORK STATE MONUMENT AT ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
DON TROIANI/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

3 ***Drawing to a Close***
Union troops cross Antietam Creek near a bullet-strewn stone bridge (now known as Burnside Bridge), but Confederate A. P. Hill's division helps drive the northern forces back. The bloodiest single day in American history ends with no decisive victory, only death on a grand scale.

Angkor Wat: Seeking the Hidden Temples of Cambodia

In northern Cambodia one of the most important archaeological sites of Southeast Asia lay undercover for centuries, swallowed up by the jungle after the mighty Khmer Empire declined. In the 1860s, a French expedition revealed its grandeur to the world.



GÜNTER GRÄFENHAIN/FOTOTECA 9X12

Pools of water reflect the harmony and majesty of Angkor Wat's structures, while its five soaring towers resemble the lush forms of the green trees surrounding them. The most recognizable landmark at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Angkor, the temple is regarded by many as the pinnacle of the dazzling, inventive culture that flourished in medieval Cambodia.

Built during the heyday of the Khmer dynasty in the 12th century, this extraordinary complex of Hindu and Buddhist monuments remained hidden and unknown, especially to European missionaries.

It was only in 1601 that a Spanish monk, Marcelo de Ribadeneyra, compiled the experiences of missionaries, whose zeal had pushed them south from Siam (modern-day Thailand) into the thick jungle areas around the Mekong River. From there they brought back intriguing reports of "a great city in the kingdom of Cambodia" with "curiously carved walls" and huge buildings that had fallen into ruin.

These ruins were mentioned by other writers, including Gabriel Quiroga de San Antonio, who in 1604 became the first European to name one of the most distinctive of the monuments, which he referred to as "a temple with five towers called Angor [*sic*]."

Lost Glory

Under constant attack by its neighbors, the Kingdom of Cambodia was in a weakened state by the 17th century. With little knowledge of the region's history, the missionaries assumed that Angkor must have been built by another civilization.

In fact, it is now believed Cambodia was once a major world power. A 2015 survey of the site has confirmed that colossal cities once lay near Angkor, and that Cambodia could well have been the largest empire on Earth in the 12th century.

THE FOUR-FACED HINDU GOD BRAHMA, CAMBODIA, 10TH CENTURY
MUSÉE GUIMET/ART ARCHIVE

1860
Henri Mouhot writes extensively on Angkor, as France begins its colonial expansion into Cambodia.

1866
Louis Delaporte's sketches of the Angkor temples trigger public interest in Cambodia back in France.

1878
The Exposition Universelle is held in Paris. Khmer artworks exhibited there cause a sensation.

1881–82
Delaporte returns to Angkor. Back in Paris, he finds a home for his collection in the Trocadéro Museum.

TOWERING GLORY
A frenzy of architectural invention at the heart of the Cambodian jungle, the temple of Angkor Wat was built by King Suryavarman II in 1150.

From the ninth century, under the Khmer dynasty, Cambodia built up an empire that covered swaths of what is now Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. When the Khmer king Suryavarman II built the Angkor Wat temples in the 1100s, the empire was at the peak of its power. Angkor Wat, meaning "capital temple," was sacred to the Hindu god Vishnu, and the complex's architecture was greatly influenced by Indian style. In a sign of the region's shifting religious loyalties, it was later adapted for Buddhist worship.

In the 1400s, the empire declined. The city was partly abandoned and rapidly swallowed by vegetation. Hundreds of years later, its mystery gave rise to outlandish myths among the first Europeans who saw it:

(continued on page 94)

WONDER OF THE ORIENT

SKETCHES such as this, made by the young Delaporte on his first visit to Angkor, were used to illustrate the book written by his expedition colleague, Francis Garnier, in 1870. Delaporte described the builders of Angkor as the "Athenians of the Far East."

LUCA TETTONI/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

FIVE PEAKS

BUILT in the 12th century A.D., when Cambodia's Khmer dynasty was at its most powerful, the five towers of Angkor Wat blend harmoniously with its natural wooded setting. Unity with nature is one of the temple's key motifs. Each tower represents one of the five peaks of the mythical Mount Meru, believed by Hindus and Buddhists to be the center of the universe.

SEBASTIAN WASEK/AGE FOTOSTOCK

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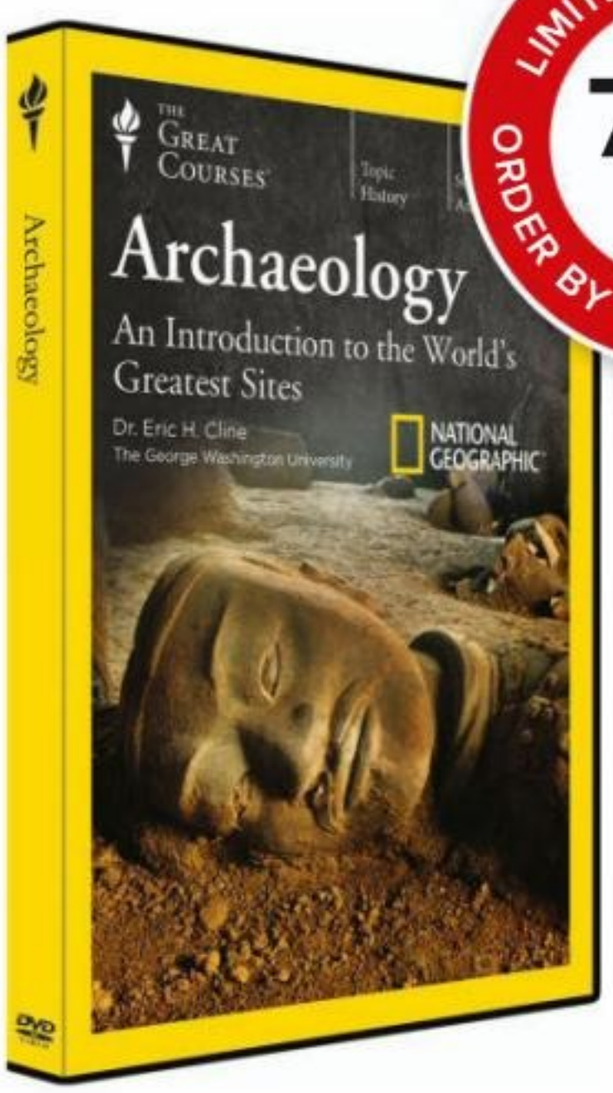

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The Elixir of Life

LOUIS DELAPORTE commissioned a series of impressions to be taken of the Angkor bas-reliefs, including a Hindu creation myth, shown below. After the Trocadéro Museum closed, they were kept in storage until 2011. Following extensive restoration, they are now displayed at the Guimet Museum of Asian Art in Paris.

THIERRY OLLIVIER/MUSÉE GUIMET/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

① *Bali Maharaja, king of the demons*

This detail shows the churning of the ocean of milk, in which both gods and demons must combine forces to churn up the elixir of life. At the center, Bali Maharaja directs the demons.

② *Vasuki, the five-headed snake*

Elsewhere in the relief, Vishnu orders the five-headed snake to wrap itself around Mount Mandara (not shown here). Vasuki turns the mountain to churn the ocean.

③ *Demon helpers*

A row of Hindu demons hold Vasuki in place, under the guidance of their leader, Bali. Far to the right of this relief (not shown) the gods are also restraining Vasuki's writhing body.

④ *The divine apsaras*

After thousands of years, the churning creates the nectar of immortality, the sun, the moon, and the *apsaras*, or celestial nymphs, whose beauty gets the better of the demons.

Spanish missionaries attributed it to leaders like Alexander the Great, while others theorized it had been built by Jews who had passed through the region before settling in China.

The French Arrive

At first, the ruins attracted some interest among the Europeans, but they were more concerned with trade and spreading Christianity than studying the rich religious history of the region.

In the mid-19th century, French colonial expansion into the area helped spark renewed interest in the history of Cambodia, and especially in finding the "lost" temple city of Angkor. In January 1860, French naturalist Henri Mouhot reached Angkor Wat, an experience that profoundly moved him: "a rival to that of Solomon," he wrote, "and erected by some ancient Michael Angelo [*sic*] . . . [it] is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome."

A year later, the explorer died prematurely in Luang Prabang in Laos, but his passion for Angkor—devoid of the Eurocentrism and prejudice of the time—fueled a growing curiosity in Cambodian culture.

Shortly after Mouhot's death, France made Cambodia a protectorate. It was decided to open up a route to the Chinese region of Yunnan along the Mekong River, and an expedition set forth to map it.

After the French exploratory team left Saigon in 1866, it did take a detour to explore Angkor. The French spent a week mapping the buildings and documenting the ruins. Louis Delaporte, a young artist, made a set of engravings in a bid to capture the deep impression the site's beauty made on him: "I admired the bold and grandiose design of these monuments no less than the perfect harmony of all their parts," he wrote. "Khmer art . . . is the most beautiful expression of human genius in this vast part of Asia."

At first, Delaporte's attempts to promote Khmer art in France were shunned. The Louvre Museum rejected the 102 crates of Cambodian antiquities. Despite this official disdain, Delaporte's patience paid off. The display of Khmer artifacts at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878 made a powerful impression on the public; soon after, Delaporte's collection was given a home at the Trocadéro Museum in Paris. Thanks to these displays, Khmer art became known to the rest of the Western world and inspired artists such as Paul Gauguin.

—*Verónica Walker*

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KING HEROD I: REVILED AND REVERED

KING HEROD I, depicted here in this 15th-century painting from Bessans, France, is a problematic historical figure. In the Bible, he is the model of a barbarous ruler, loyal to Roman power, murderer of innocents, and traitor to his faith. In Roman histories, he was known as "Herod the Great," an enlightened ruler and architect of monuments. Historical records show that his policies enabled prosperity to take root in Judaea. How do historians reconcile these two competing portraits of the man?

THE MIGHTY KINGDOM OF KUSH

EGYPT'S 25TH DYNASTY sprang from the Nubian kingdom of Kush, located in modern-day Sudan. Following an Assyrian invasion of Egypt in the seventh century B.C., the Nubian kings retreated south, where their civilization continued to thrive for centuries. Ruling from their capital Meroe, the Kushite pyramids and works of art—such as this golden piece adorned with the head of the god Amun—testify to a robust culture, ripe for exploration.

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Watering Rome's Empire

Little speaks more eloquently of the combined might and sophistication of Rome than its aqueducts, sating the thirst of lands all over the Roman world, from Spain to Syria.

Muslim Masters of Medicine

As Islam spread, the caliphs revived ancient medical learning in the cities they conquered. Combining old and new methods, Islamic medicine became the envy of the world.

Sparta's Military Machine

Their spurning of luxury and philosophy contrasted sharply with neighboring city-states. From cradle to grave, Spartan society was geared to the waging and winning of wars.

The Corrupt Bargain of 1824

Backroom deals and covert alliances ended the so-called Era of Good Feelings when Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams vied for the presidency in a hotly contested election.

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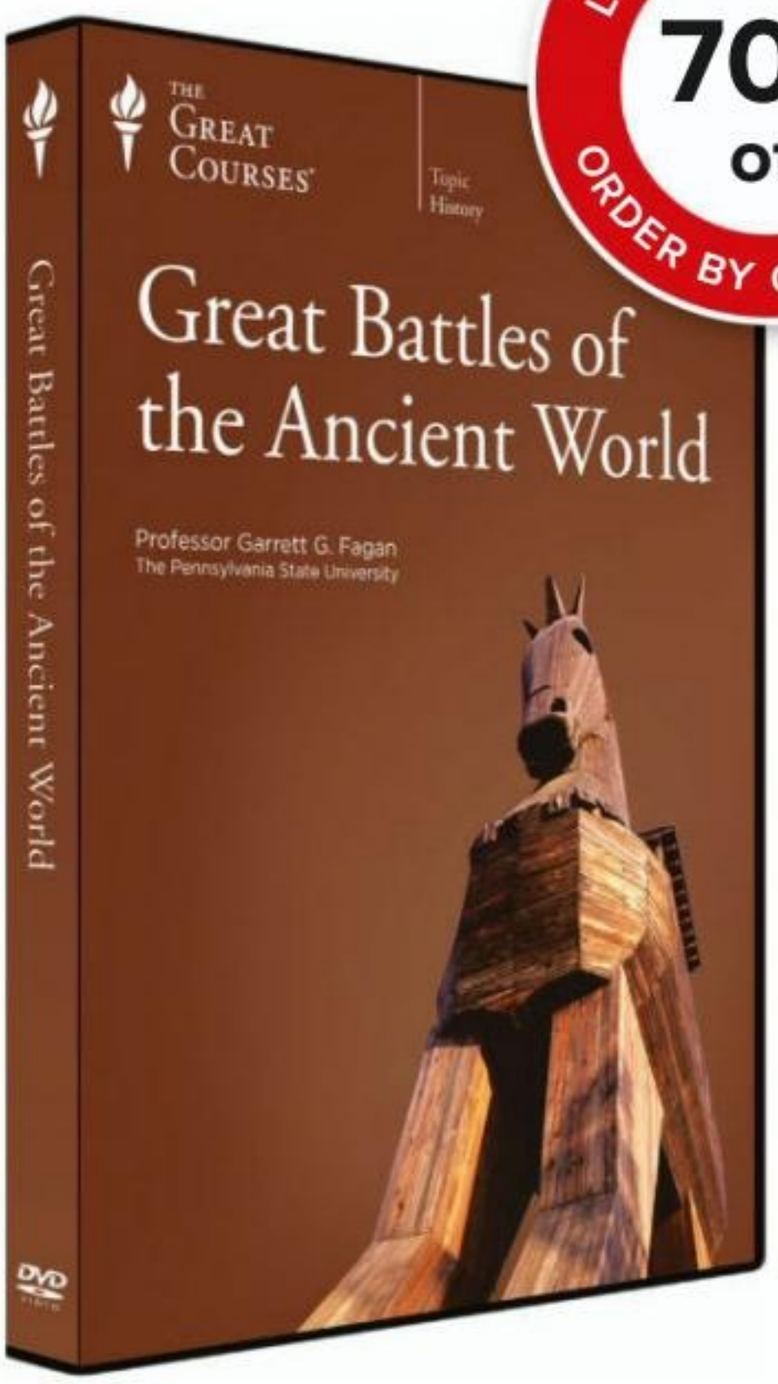

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